DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 948 UD 030 752

AUTHOR	Sebring, Penny Bender; And Others
TITLE	Charting Reform: Chicago Teachers Take Stock. A Report.
INSTITUTION	Consortium on Chicago School Research, IL.
SPONS AGENCY	Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield.; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Joyce Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Spencer Foundation, Chicago, Ill.
PUB DATE	Aug 95
NOTE	81p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Community Involvement; *Educational Change; Educational Research; *Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Parent Participation; Professional Development; School Restructuring; School Size; School Surveys; *Secondary School Teachers; *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Chicago Public Schools IL; Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

In 1994, as Chicago (Illinois) completed the fifth year of school reform under the Chicago School Reform Act, the Consortium on Chicago School Research launched its third and fourth surveys of teacher and student responses to change. In all, 39,000 students, 6,200 elementary school teachers, and 2,600 high school teachers completed the surveys. Individually tailored reports were provided to the 266 elementary and 46 high schools that participated. This report, first of a two-part series, focuses on school leadership, parent involvement, and professional community and development. Most of the information was drawn from the teacher survey. Survey responses made it clear that a broad set of developments must occur if Chicago is to fulfill the intentions of the reforms. Teachers, parents, and the community must work together more cooperatively to engage students in learning. Most teachers held their principals in high regard and saw them as the most important agents of local school reform. Findings of the surveys also indicate that reform is progressing more successfully in smaller schools, where leadership and a sense of professional community are more easily fostered. Commentaries by Ruben Carriedo, Charles Payne, and Betty Malen supplement the discussion. (Contains 85 graphs, 13 box plots, 1 map, 1 table, and 52 references.) (SLD)

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ED 390 948

Charting Reform: Chicago Teachers Take Stock

A Report Sponsored by the Consortium on Chicago School Research

August 1995

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Background

Teachers' Overall Assessment of School Improvement

School Leadership

Parent Involvement

Professional Community and Orientation

Program Coherence

Reform in Different Elementary School Communities

Conclusion and Commentary

Penny Bender Sebring, Consortium on Chicago School Research
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Stuart Luppescu, Consortium on Chicago School Research
Yeow Meng Thum, Consortium on Chicago School Research

Winifred A. Lopez, Center for School Improvement
BetsAnn Smith, Consortium on Chicago School Research

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August 1995

Background page 1

Teachers' Overall Assessment of School Improvement page 4

School Leadership page 14

Parent Involvement page 23

Professional Community and Orientation page 28

Program Coherence page 50

Reform in Different Elementary School Communities page 53

Conclusion and Commentary page 64

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Acknowledgments

A study of this scope requires the talents and skills of many different individuals, and we wish to thank and acknowledge the people who contributed significantly to the success of this project. Yeow Meng Thum organized and maintained multiple, large data files, and he and Stuart Luppescu conducted a wealth of statistical analyses. Stuart Luppescu, along with Winifred Lopez, developed the scales that frame the report. BetsAnn Smith wrote the two case descriptions.

The Chicago Public Schools' Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning provided considerable support in the distribution and collection of thousands of surveys, optical scanning, and data retrieval. Special thanks go to William Rice, Charles Collins, William Galante, John Delmonte, and Sandra Storey.

During the survey development stage, several national advisors helped us create specific subject matter questions. We are thankful to Andrew Porter, Fred Newmann, Tom Hoffer, Julia Smith, and George Hillocks.

At the Consortium, Eric Camburn and Jami Camburn coordinated survey administration. Benjamin Wright (University of Chicago) offered valuable guidance on construction of the scales. Kay Kersch Kirkpatrick organized publicity for the surveys and provided extensive editorial support for this publication. Sandra Jennings took painstaking care in generating bar graphs and processing numerous drafts of the report. Others who assisted in various ways include Tom Golz, Sara Hallman, David Kerbow, Diane King, Jaekyung Lee, Sandra Smith, and Lisa Scruggs.

We appreciate the insight and efforts of the following work and advisory groups during the questionnaire development and the analysis stage:

Teacher Survey Work Group:

Chair, John Easton
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Rose Meyer, Curie
Linda Mitchell, DuSable
Joann Podkul, Bowen
Alice Price, Lincoln Park
Willie E. Scott, Simeon
Faye B. Williams, Carver

And, finally, we wish to thank the 8,800 Chicago teachers who gave us 45 minutes during the hectic last days of school in 1994.

Funding for this study was provided by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Spencer Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, and the Illinois State Board of Education.

This report reflects the interpretations of the authors. Although the Consortium Steering Committee provided technical advice and reviewed an earlier version of the report, no formal endorsement by these individuals, their organizations, or the full Consortium should be assumed.

Background

In 1994, as Chicago completed the fifth year of school reform under the Chicago School Reform Act, the Consortium launched its third and fourth surveys in the *Charting Reform* series. These surveys of teachers and students make it possible to "take the pulse" of Chicago school reform, to gauge what changes have occurred, and to see how reform has affected them. Major topics in the surveys include: school governance, parent involvement, professional community, a climate centered on student learning, and classroom instruction. Teachers and students in 266 elementary and 46 high schools took part in the surveys. In all, 39,000 students completed surveys, along with 6,200 elementary school teachers and 2,600 high school teachers.[1]

In the early winter of 1995, the Consortium provided individually tailored reports to all schools that participated in the study.[2] These reports were designed to help schools assess their strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of improvement efforts under way. Schools were encouraged to use these data to complete a self-analysis according to *Pathways to Achievement: The Three-Tiered Process, Self-Analysis Guide*, which was produced by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

The responses to these two new surveys, along with the results from the two previous Consortium surveys, yield rich and comprehensive information on the progress of reform efforts in the Chicago Public Schools. Extant case studies and anecdotal accounts suggest that there is great diversity in how schools are responding to reform, but it is only through broad-based analysis that we can better understand this variability. Just how great are the differences from one school to another and to what extent are they linked to other factors in the schools and their communities?

This is the first report in a two-part series. Here we focus on three of the essential supports for student learning in *Pathways to Achievement*: school leadership, parental involvement, and professional community and development. The second report will probe two additional supports for learning: the nature of schools' learning climate and instructional programs. The information in this first report draws mainly from teachers, although some use is also made of student data. We reverse this process in the second report which primarily examines students' experiences.

Teachers are central actors in school reform. Thus, we focus here on teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. We have tried to bring fidelity to their perspectives about their work, their school community, and the progress of reform. Successful improvement efforts are highly unlikely unless teachers seriously engage the reform. Any effort to promote improvement, whether at the system or individual school level, must be grounded in an understanding of how teachers perceive their circumstances. We hope that this report provides a deeper perspective on the issues embedded here, and we are pleased to be able to give voice to the teachers' perspective.

On balance, teachers' views on some matters deviate from those offered by students in our next report. Both of these, in turn, differ some from those of "outside researchers" looking in at school activities. (For this reason, this report includes two short case studies from this "researcher

perspective" and several more appear in the second report.) By comparing across these various perspectives, we develop a more comprehensive understanding of Chicago's reform.

Beyond these two reports, a third report detailing trends in student achievement over the last nine years will be released later this fall by the Chicago Panel on School Policy and the Center for School Improvement. During the next year, the Consortium will also share results of its three-year study of the effects of reform on classroom instruction. Based on extensive interviews and over 1,000 hours of classroom observations, this study will examine changes in curriculum and instruction in the context of decentralization. We are also currently attempting our first survey of Local School Council (LSC) members and hope to report on this sometime next year. All these studies will add greatly to our collective understanding of school reform and school improvement.

What is Reform?

By devolving authority to local schools, the 1988 Chicago School Reform Act sought to weaken central power of the school

About the Surveys . . .

Work on these surveys began in the fall of 1993 as "work groups" were assembled to identify the key concepts that should be included and procedures for data collection. These groups involved researchers from local universities, independent organizations, and the school system. As is customary in all Consortium projects, the survey development and planning were greatly influenced by a diverse group of stakeholders. Teacher and student advisory committees played a major role in creating and conducting these surveys. Elementary and high school teachers and students discussed and reviewed materials and procedures during survey development. Teachers and students also pilot-tested many new survey questions and provided us with feedback on the content of the surveys. After the data collection was complete, teachers and students helped review basic findings to sharpen our interpretations.

In addition to the teacher and student advisory groups, we held numerous formal and informal discussions across the city with important local constituencies. We sought ideas and reactions from a broad base of civic and political leadership through our Constituent Advisory Board. We also drew on assistance from many national experts who critically reviewed technical aspects of the surveys. The work groups collected numerous surveys from other school districts, from nationally funded research projects, and from school improvement efforts. These many sources helped us shape surveys that provide a fair and accurate picture of how teachers and students perceive their school experiences and how Chicago's unique reform is progressing.

The surveys were administered in May and June of 1994 to sixth-, eighth-, and tenth-grade students and to elementary and high school teachers. A Spanish language version was available for students. Students completed surveys during a class. Teachers completed surveys during teacher meetings or on their own.

The basic statistic presented in the report is "percentage of teachers" who responded to a survey item in a specific way. The percentage that we use for this purpose is based on the probability sample of 80 elementary and 31 high schools. When we compare different types of schools or ascertain the relative importance of various factors on responses, we make use of all the available data from the total of 266 elementary and 46 participating high schools.

system and to promote greater site-based control. Reform gave principals greater authority over the school budget, the physical building, and personnel decisions. For the first time, principals, freed from seniority requirements, were able to recruit and hire new teachers. Having lost their tenure and now accountable to their Local School Councils, principals were encouraged to redirect initiatives toward local constituencies and their concerns.

The reform package created a real voice for parents and community members because each group has representatives on the LSC. These parent-majority councils have the power to hire and fire the school principal and to approve the budget and the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Teachers were also given an expanded voice. Through their two seats on the LSC, they have direct influence on school affairs, including the choice of principal. Teachers also have advisory responsibility over school curriculum and instruction through the teacher-elected Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC).

Under the Chicago School Reform Act, new resources also became available to support school improvements. The law changed how state compensatory education funds (state Chapter 1 funds) were to be used. Money now flows to each school based on the number of disadvantaged students. Schools with many disadvantaged students received substantial increases in discretionary dollars and greater freedom in how they could be spent.

To guide the local school change process, the Chicago School Reform Act also formulated explicit educational goals for children and an extended set of school objectives. Principals were required to develop three-year improvement plans subject to LSC approval.

By spring 1994, when the student and teacher surveys were administered, three LSC elections had occurred—in 1989, 1991, and 1993. In addition, schools were implementing their fourth SIP and school budget and were developing plans for the fifth year.

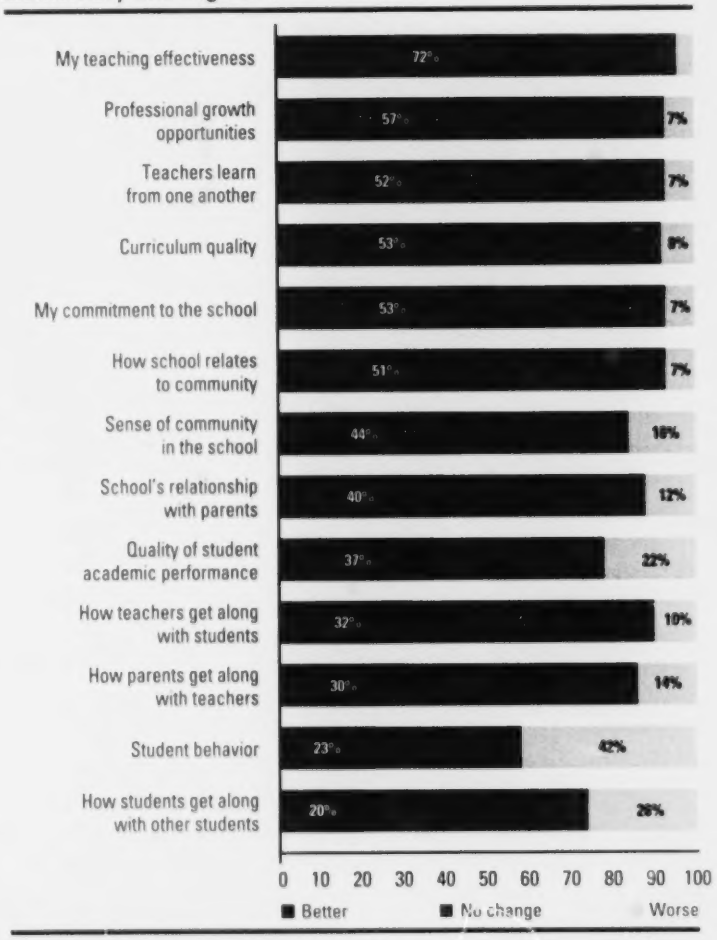
Section I

Teachers' Overall Assessment of School Improvement

We begin by taking a look at how both elementary and high school teachers across the system assess general changes and rate reform in their schools. We asked teachers to evaluate whether thirteen different features of their schools had gotten worse, not changed, or gotten better in the past three years. These questions asked about the teachers themselves (their teaching effectiveness, their professional opportunities, their commitment to the school, and their learning from other teachers); about their relationships with students, parents, and community; and, finally, several questions about their students (their behavior, academic performance, and how they get along with other students). Since on average there were only small differences between elementary and high school teachers' answers to specific questions, we have combined their responses. (Generally elementary teachers were more positive by a margin of 3 percent to 7 percent.)[3]

Teachers offer very positive reports about improvements in their own teaching, their opportunities for professional growth, their experiences with colleagues, and their own commitment. Over 70 percent said that their teaching effectiveness had gotten *better* in the past three years, and only 4 percent said that it had gotten *worse*. In other words, for every teacher reporting a decline in effectiveness, 18 teachers claimed

Recent Changes in Specific Aspects of School
Elementary and High School Teachers



Note: Due to limited space, numbers for 5 percent or less are not shown.

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greater effectiveness. Also, many more teachers say that their professional growth opportunities are *better* than they are *worse* (57 percent to 7 percent). The same holds true for their own commitment to the school (53 percent to 7 percent) and teachers learning from each other (52 percent to 7 percent). In addition, the majority of teachers see improvements in curriculum quality over the past three years (53 percent to 8 percent).

Teachers are also positive about parents and community relations. Half report that the school's relations with the community are *better* (7 percent say *worse*) and 40 percent note improved school relations with parents (12 percent say they have gotten *worse*).

On the majority of these questions, between 35 and 45 percent report *no change*. In the context of the need for major improvements in most Chicago schools, these "status quo" reports temper the generally positive results described so far. A broad base of teachers see improvements, but many others remain unaffected. In fact, a majority of teachers offer *no change* reports on items that ask about teacher-student, parent-teacher, and student-student relations. Although in general there are many positive reports from teachers about recent changes, the primary relations among teachers, students, and parents that support student learning have been less affected.

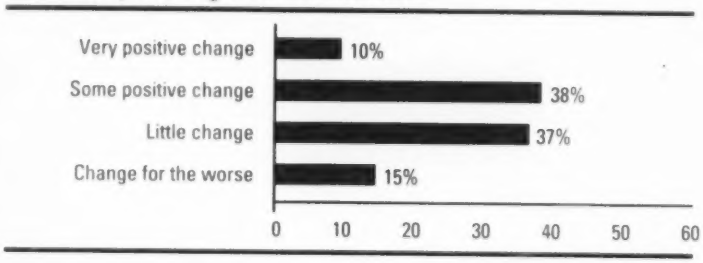
The most negative teacher reports focus on student behavior. By almost two to one, more teachers say that student behavior has gotten *worse* in the past three years (42 percent) than those who say that behavior has gotten *better* (23 percent). Similarly, more teachers say that how students get along with other students has gotten *worse* (26 percent) than *better* (20 percent).

Although teachers overwhelmingly believe that their own effectiveness and curriculum quality have improved, they do not necessarily see corresponding student results. Only slightly more than one-third believe that student academic performance has gotten *better* in the past three years and nearly one-quarter say that it has gotten *worse*.

For purposes of summarizing how teachers responded to these questions, we created a scale based on the 13 "recent change" items.[4] At one end of the scale are the teachers who note *very positive change*. They see constructive changes occurring in all areas in the past three years. Ten percent of teachers are in this category. Another 38 percent of the teachers recognize that *some positive change* has occurred. Those teachers note improvements in all areas including student achievement but not in student behavior. The next group of teachers—37 percent—cluster in a category we call *little change*. They rated that certain areas have gotten better, such as their teaching effectiveness and professional growth opportunities, that most other areas have not changed, and that student behavior has gotten worse. The final category, *change for the worse*, contains the most negative responses. Fifteen percent of the teachers indicated that student behavior, student academic performance, and how students get along with other students have gotten worse. These teachers generally did not note improvements anywhere. At best, they thought things remained the same.

That teachers are quite positive about changes in their own work is especially interesting in light of early criticisms that the Chicago school reform was

Extent of Recent Changes
Elementary and High School Teachers

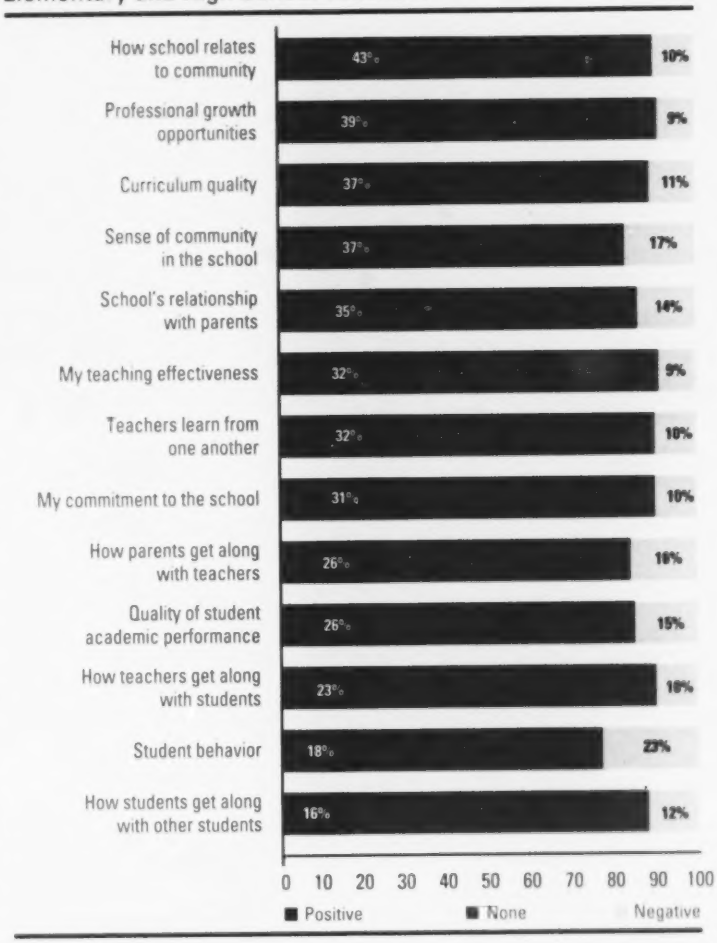


"antiprofessional." In spite of those early sentiments, teachers offer quite positive reports about improvements in their work lives and suggest that the reform may have even contributed to a greater professionalism among teachers.

Similarly, Chicago school reform made explicit another core aim—that of reestablishing greater connections between communities and their schools. Teachers also offer generally positive responses to questions in this domain.

While, overall, teachers make more positive than negative responses, they are also indicating that much hard work remains to be done in order to improve instruction and student achievement. The gap between their ratings of improved teacher effectiveness and improvements in student academic performance is a key indicator in this regard. While many changes may be occurring in classrooms, improvements in the bottom line—student achievement—are harder to find. To understand these trends better requires a closer look at developments in teaching and learning. For this reason, the Consortium's next report examines questions about instruction from the perspective of both teachers and students.

Impact of Reform on Specific Aspects of School
Elementary and High School Teachers



Impact of Reform

We also asked teachers about the specific impact of Chicago school reform on the same thirteen features. Teachers are most positive about the effects of school reform on the school's relations with the community. Forty-three percent of the teachers say that reform has had a *positive* effect in this area compared to 10 percent who say that reform has had a *negative* effect. Almost half of the teachers—47 percent—say that school reform has had no impact. By a wide margin (35 percent *positive* to 14 percent *negative*), teachers also agree that reform has had a constructive impact on the school's relations with parents.

Again, teachers note positive effects of school reform on their own professional activities. They are positive about the impact of school reform on professional

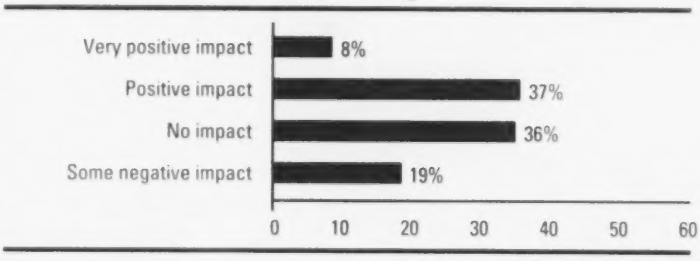
opportunities (39 percent *positive* versus 9 percent *negative*), teachers learning from each other (32 percent *positive* to 10 percent *negative*), and their own commitment to the school (31 percent *positive* to 10 percent *negative*). Teachers also give reform credit for improving curriculum quality (37 percent *positive* versus 11 percent *negative*). In all of these cases, the number of teachers saying that school reform has had a *positive* impact far outweighs the number who believe that reform has had a *negative* impact by between three and four to one.

Even so, half or more of the teachers state that reform has had no impact on most of these items. In general, there is a considerably higher level of neutral responses for the impact of reform than for the teacher ratings of recent changes. In fact, the majority response for all but two items is the *none* category. The most extreme instances of this are the two items that enquire about how teachers and students get along with students. Over two-thirds of the teachers offer reports of no impact in these two areas.

Teachers are least positive about reform's impact in the same basic areas where they observe the fewest improvements in the past three years. How students get along with each other is the area where reform has had the least positive impact, with only 16 percent reporting a *positive* effect and 12 percent a *negative* effect. The most negative reports about reform are for student behavior, with 23 percent observing a *negative* effect and 18 percent *positive*. Relatively high percentages of teachers also offered *negative* ratings of how parents get along with teachers and how teachers and students relate.

Again using a scale to summarize the results, we found that about 8 percent of teachers were *very positive*; that is, they indicate that reform has led to improvements in all areas. Another 37 percent of the teachers were *positive*. They believe that reform has led

Impact of Reform Elementary and High School Teachers



to improvements in most areas except student behavior. Another large group of teachers (about 36 percent) report *no impact*. For the most part, these teachers believe that school reform has had no effect in most areas. A final group of teachers, about 19 percent, believe that school reform has had *some negative impact* on student behavior but has not affected other aspects of the school.

Looking across teachers' reports about both recent changes and the effects of school reform, a general pattern is apparent. Teachers are most positive about their own effectiveness, professional opportunities and commitment, and about strengthened relations between the school and community. They are least positive about effects on students, especially student behavior. In this regard, it is worth noting that researchers have documented urban schools that are successful in breaking down alienation and shaping students' behavior so that they can engage in productive academic work.[5]

It is important to recognize that the weakest areas identified by teachers cluster around the relations among students, teachers with students, and parents with teachers. If significant advances in student learning are to occur, these primary social relations must support it. Taken as a set, they complement the "technical strand" of school improvement, involving professional development and curriculum and instruction.

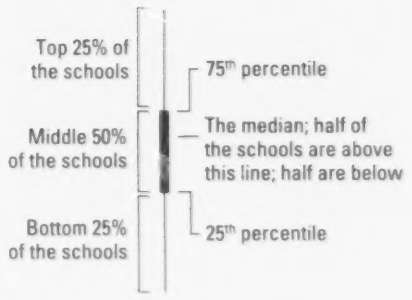
Teachers are seeing some improvements on the technical side, although much more needs to be done here as the next report documents. The lack of improvements in the primary social relationships that support student learning is worrisome. While teachers offer positive reports about institutional changes (e.g., how the school relates to the community), these improved relations are not manifest at the classroom level. These teacher comments direct our attention toward an aspect of reform that has received much public acknowledgment, but apparently less constructive action—the need to strengthen primary relationships among teachers, students, and parents that advance learning. This is a major finding that runs throughout this report.

Comparison of Elementary and High Schools

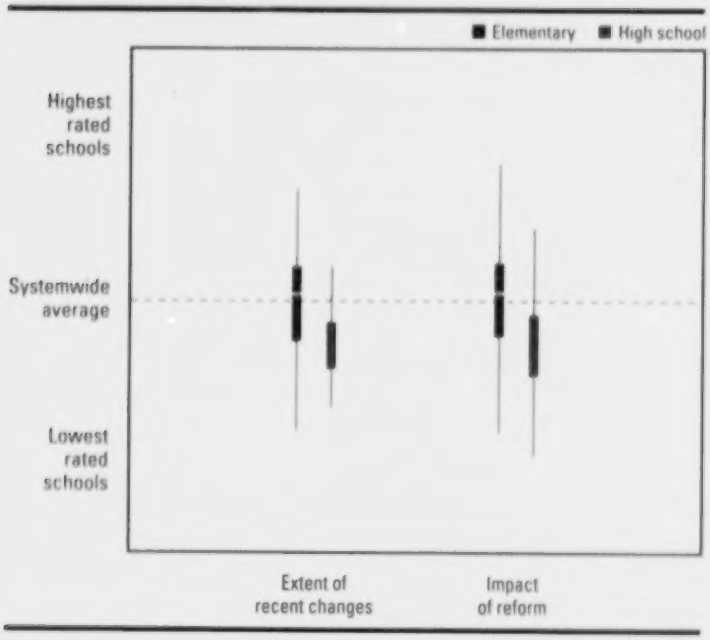
High school and elementary school teachers see their schools very differently. Even though the average responses for elementary and high school teachers are only moderately different, when we group teachers into their schools and examine the variability among schools, this picture comes into clear focus. There are many elementary schools where the typical teacher response is quite positive. In high schools, however, the average responses are lower,

How to Read a Box Plot and Why We Use Them

The box plot details the relative frequency of positive and negative school reports. Each box (black for elementary schools and gray for high schools) encloses the middle 50 percent of the schools. The lines, called "whiskers", extending up and down from the box, show the range of scores for the top and bottom quartile schools. These are the highest and lowest performing schools on each particular scale. Within each profile, the scales are centered on the systemwide average for the schools that participated in the survey.


Top 25% of the schools
75th percentile
Middle 50% of the schools
The median; half of the schools are above this line; half are below
Bottom 25% of the schools
25th percentile

Overall Assessment of School Improvement
Distribution of School Indicators



and very few schools are characterized by overall positive reports. We also find much greater variability among the elementary schools. Some schools offer reports which suggest that these schools are really moving forward; other elementary schools, in contrast, are more negative, looking more like many of the high schools.

All of the data presented so far in this report has focused on how individual teachers see reform. It is also informative to examine these trends at the school level. For this purpose, we computed an overall indicator for each school on recent changes and effects of reform by averaging the responses of all teachers in each school on each of these two measures. In some schools most teachers are positive, producing a high value for the school indicator. In other schools, many teachers are negative, yielding a low school value. The box plots display the relative frequency of positive and negative school reports. There are two box plots for each measure. The black one on the left shows elementary schools and the gray box on the right, high schools.

The differences between elementary and high schools are readily apparent. Faculties in many elementary schools are quite positive about the extent of recent changes and the impact of reform on those changes. The average response among high schools is, however, roughly comparable to responses among the lowest quarter of elementary schools. Even some of the highest-rated high schools are less enthusiastic than an average elementary school. These substantial differences between elementary and high schools is a second major finding that runs throughout this report.

Teachers' Perceptions of Elementary Schools in 1991 and 1994

The 1994 teacher survey contained several questions that were also asked in the 1991 survey of elementary school teachers. Thus, we were able to directly compare teachers' responses over the three years between surveys. In addition to the data already presented above, these comparisons provide another means to assess recent progress, and they offer further evidence about ways the school system as a whole is changing. To make the most valid comparisons, we limited this analysis to the 245 elementary schools that participated in the surveys in both years.

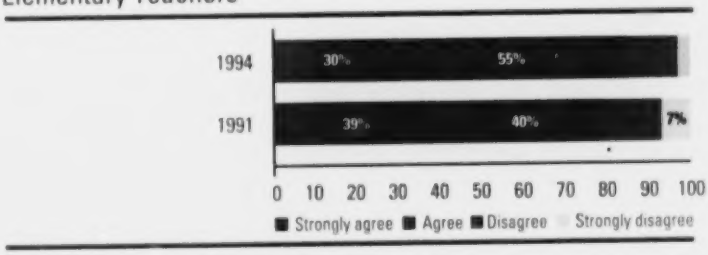
In general, teachers' responses in 1994 are about the same as in 1991. On some questions, teachers offer more positive responses in 1994. On other questions, they are more negative, and in many cases the responses are almost identical.

As an overall indicator of teacher reaction to reform, both surveys asked whether teachers

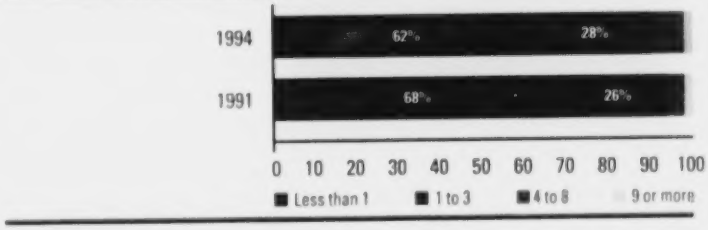
usually look forward to working each day at their school. In 1991 about 79 percent of teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this question. In 1994 about 85 percent offer similar responses. One interesting trend is apparent in this and several other items. Fewer teachers use the extreme responses—*strongly agree* or *strongly disagree*—in 1994 than in 1991. There appears to be a growing convergence toward *agree*.

This pattern of responses suggests two movements occurring simultaneously. A larger portion of teachers are engaging in the reform and, as a result, moving into the *agree* category from the negative side of the ledger. At the same time, some of the most active and committed teachers may be realizing what it really takes for genuine improvement to occur. As a result, they now offer somewhat more guarded responses. Both of these are natural elements in a serious organizational change process. School improvement is a long-term endeavor. It creates a sense of reality, even as it recruits more enthusiasts. We now take a look at specific comparisons between 1991 and 1994.

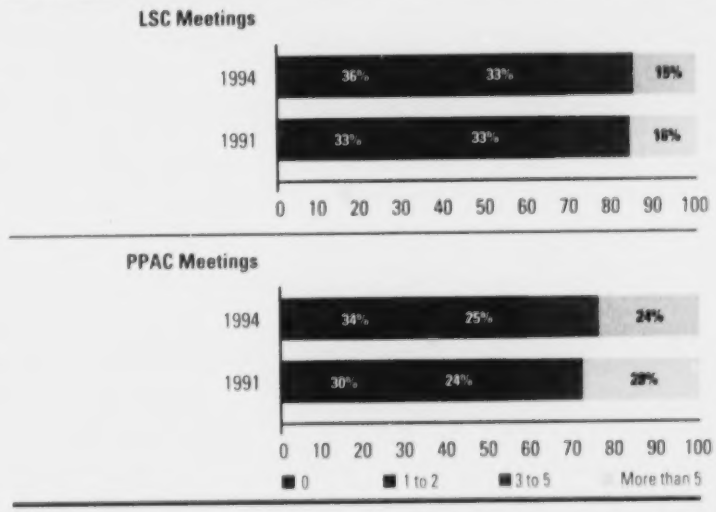
I Usually Look Forward to Working Each Day at This School
Elementary Teachers



Hours Worked on LSC or PPAC during Typical Week
Elementary Teachers

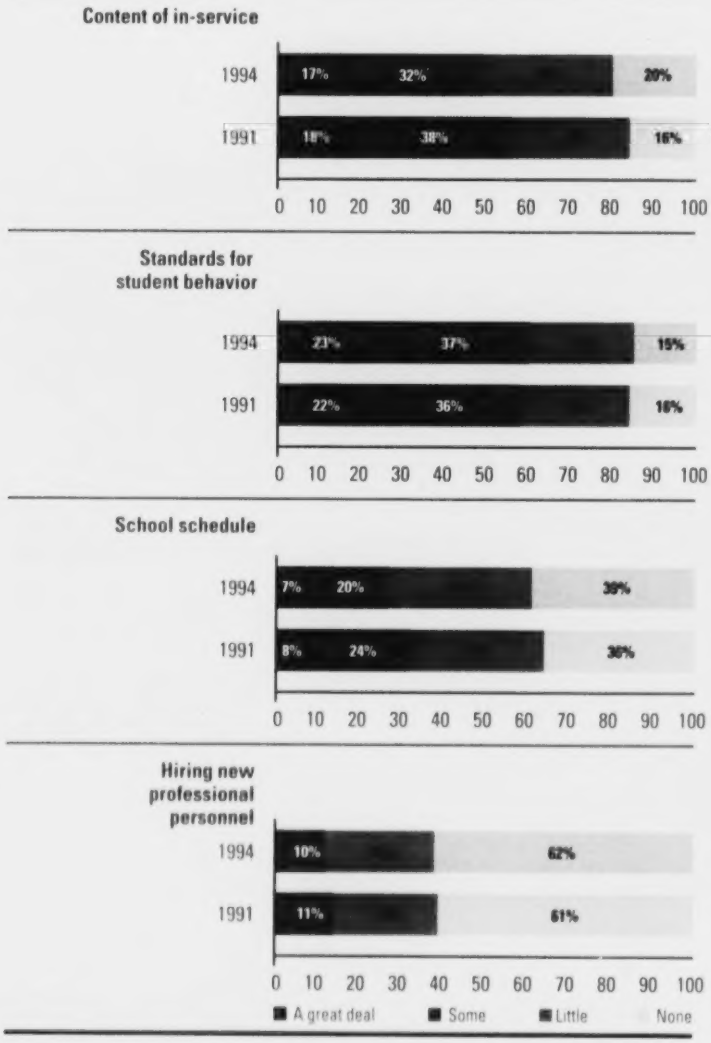


Number of Meetings Attended since September
Elementary Teachers

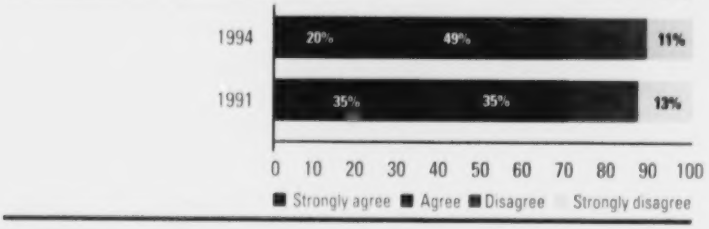


Governance. Teachers report spending more time each week on LSC and PPAC business in the 1994 survey than they did in 1991. More teachers now spend significant amounts of time (four hours or more per week) than previously. Similarly, in 1991, 68 percent of the teachers spent less than one hour per week on these affairs, whereas 62 percent report this minimal level of involvement in 1994. Counterbalancing this is the fact that somewhat fewer teachers report attending LSC

Amount of Elementary Teacher Influence over:



I Feel Comfortable Voicing Concerns
Elementary Teachers



and PPAC meetings in 1994 than in 1991. For example, in 1994, 36 percent of teachers say that they attended no LSC meetings the past year—up from 33 percent in 1991.

Teacher influence. Teachers report in 1994 having somewhat less influence in their schools over the content of school in-services (training and professional development), as compared to the first survey.[6] In 1994, more than half (51 percent) describe their influence in the lowest categories, whereas in 1991 only 44 percent marked this. In terms of setting standards for student behavior, about the same percent of teachers report *some* or *a great deal* of influence in 1994 as in 1991 (60 percent versus 58 percent, respectively). Teachers' influence over the school schedule shows a slight decline, whereas their involvement in hiring new professional personnel has remained stable. Overall, about as many teachers feel comfortable voicing their concerns in 1994 as three years earlier (69 percent and 70 percent). This item offers another example of the growing moderations in teachers' views from 1991 to 1994. The *strongly agrees* and *strongly disagrees* drop from 48 percent to 31 percent.

Involvement in school improvement planning. Survey questions about the School Improvement Plan offer an interesting story

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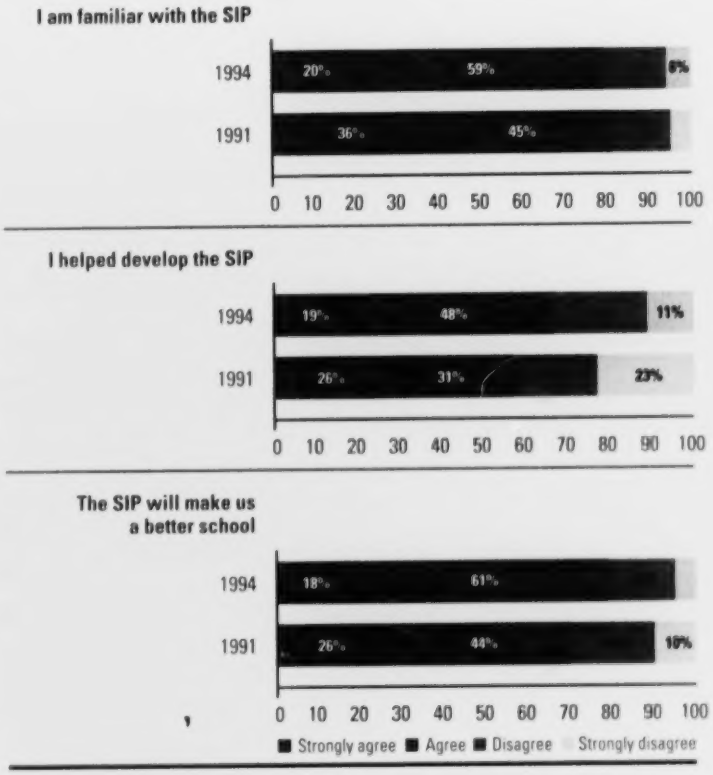
about teacher involvement in this important process. The vast majority of teachers still *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are familiar with most of the major points of the SIP. More, however, now indicate that they helped to develop the SIP. There is an increase of about 10 percent here from 1991 to 1994.

Similarly, more teachers are optimistic about the prospects of the SIP making the school better over the next five years. In 1994, 79 percent of teachers *agree* or *strongly agree* with this statement, an increase of 9 percent. The responses to this item are another instance where we find fewer teachers marking *strongly agree* but many more indicating that they *agree* with the statement.

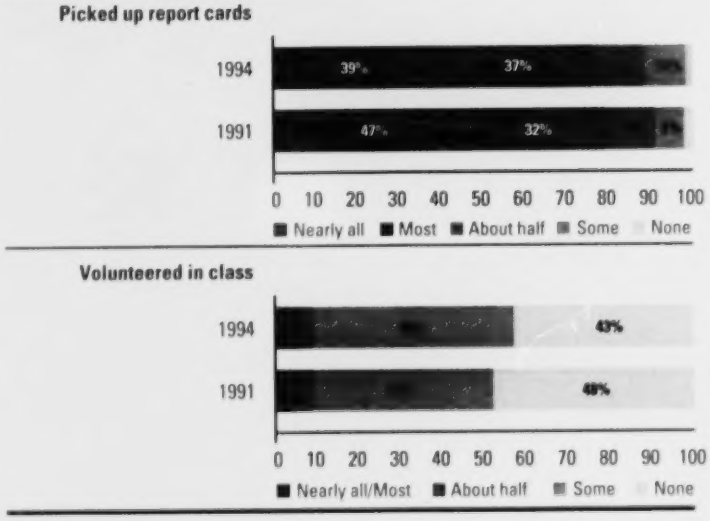
Parent involvement. In 1994, fewer teachers indicate that *nearly all* parents picked up their child's report card on report card pickup day than in 1991. On the other hand, there is a slight increase in teachers reporting that at least some parents are volunteering in classrooms. Here again we have what appear to be counterbalancing trends in the data.

Student behavior. Slightly more teachers in 1994 than in 1991 report frequent disruptions by students (five or more times per day). At the same time, however, an increased proportion of teachers report few disruptions (one or none per day). Interruptions

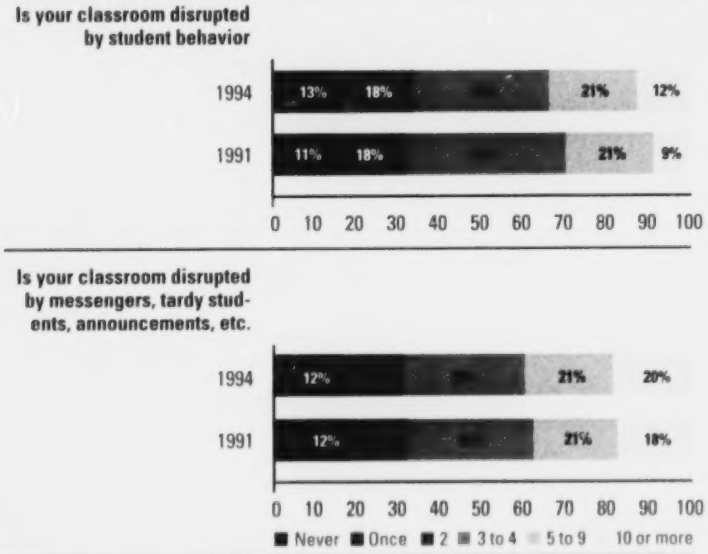
Selected Questions about the SIP



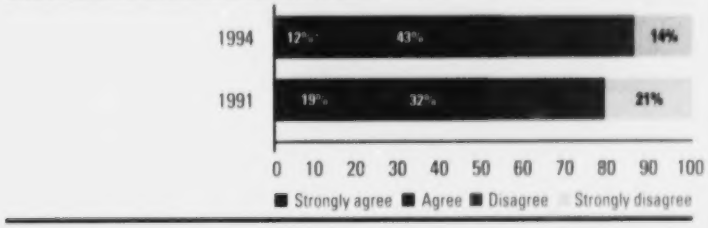
How Many Parents



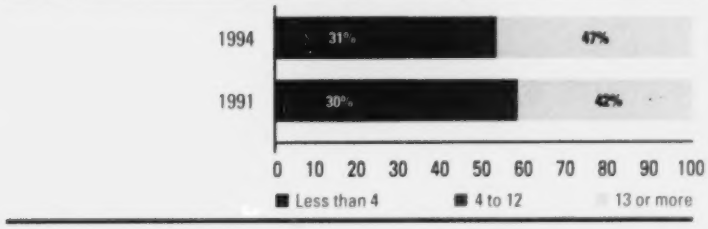
How Many Times per Day



Rules for Student Behavior Strictly Enforced



Hours of Class Preparation for Student Testing



by messengers, announcements, etc., are also slightly up in 1994. Apparently, distractions are becoming less problematic for some teachers while simultaneously getting worse for others. More teachers in 1994 believe that rules for student behavior are consistently enforced, although again fewer teachers are in the *strongly agree* category.

Student testing. Teachers report an increase in the number of hours spent in preparing students for standardized tests such as the IGAP and ITBS. About five percent more teachers report spending *13 or more hours* getting ready for tests. In 1994, nearly half of the teachers fall in this top category. This "testing orientation" in the CPS, which was already high in 1991, has increased further over the last three years. At some point, schools must ask themselves whether or not they have achieved the proper balance between teaching test preparation skills and carrying out broader instructional goals.

Section II

School Leadership

The Chicago Reform Act of 1988 focused on reclaiming initiative for parents, community members, teachers, and principals. The new structures and roles established by this law sought to create a political force in school communities for reform. At base was the belief that the expanded engagement of local participants in the school's work would sustain attention and provide substantial support for improvements in classroom instruction and student learning.

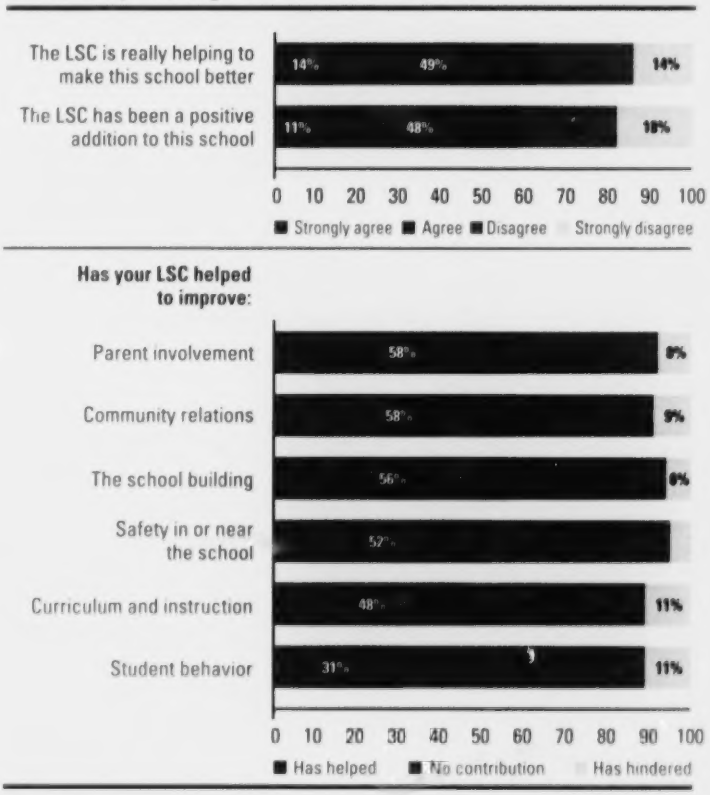
Chicago's reform has created a complex dynamic at the school building level. It involves an interplay among three sites of leadership: parents and community members through the LSC, an expanded role-authority for the principal, and the collective force of the school faculty. Each of these has the potential to challenge dysfunctional school operations and promote meaningful improvements.

We now consider the nature of the activity occurring in each of these distinct sites of leadership. We focus particular attention on teachers' perceptions of how these groups work together to develop, approve, and implement the School Improvement Plan (SIP), which is the major instrument set out in the original school reform legislation to advance student learning.

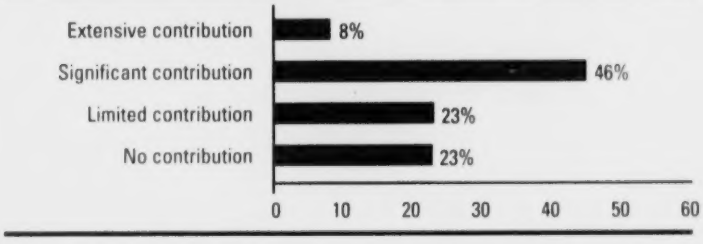
The Local School Council

The LSC is the primary agent for school governance under Chicago school reform. It includes the principal, two teachers, six parents, and two community residents who set formal policy and advise on many important school issues. Specifically, it is responsible for selecting and evaluating the principal and for approving both the School Improvement Plan and the school budget.

Specific Contributions of the LSC
Elementary and High School Teachers



LSC Contribution Elementary and High School Teachers



Teachers were asked to rate whether the LSC *has helped*, *has hindered*, or has made *no contribution* to improvements in a variety of specific areas. They were also asked to rate their overall impressions of LSC performance.[7]

In general, teachers are relatively positive about the LSC. About 60 percent *agree* or *strongly agree* that the LSC is helping to make the school better and also say that the LSC is a positive addition to the school.

In terms of the specific components of school improvement, teachers are most positive about the LSC's contribution to helping parent involvement (58 percent), community relations (58 percent), improvements in the school building (56 percent), and school safety (52 percent). Relatively few teachers see the LSC as a hindrance in any of these areas. Approximately half report that the LSC *has helped* curriculum and instruction, but only about one-third see the LSC as a positive influence on student behavior. Almost 60 percent of the teachers say that the LSC has made *no contribution* in this last area.

These findings are consistent with our earlier study on actively restructuring schools.[8] In general, the most visible contributions of LSCs are in school operations such as facilities and safety. Direct impact on instruction and classroom behavior is less common. Parents and community members tend to defer to the principal and teachers for leadership in these areas.[9]

By combining teachers' responses to these eight questions, we created a scale to judge their overall views of LSC performance. We find that 8 percent of the teachers believe that their LSC has made *extensive contributions* to their schools. These teachers note that the LSC has helped improvement efforts in all areas, including instruction and student behavior. Another 46 percent of the teachers note *significant contributions* of their LSCs. They mark improvements in most but not all of the areas. About a quarter of the teachers note more *limited contributions*, focusing primarily on improving the facility and community relations. Another quarter of the teachers offer responses that indicate *no contribution*. These teachers believe that the LSC is not working to improve the school overall and, in some regards, is a negative factor in school life.

Principal Leadership

Principals play a central role in school leadership. They are the single most important actor in promoting reform at the building level.[10] Their efforts can bring teachers, parents, and students together to create and sustain meaningful school improvements.

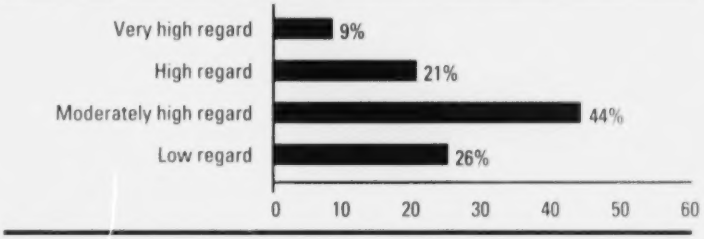
This survey asked teachers ten questions about whether their principal facilitates school development and broadly includes a range of people in the process. Specifically, the survey enquired whether the principal promotes parental involvement, sets high standards for teaching, and communicates a clear vision. We also asked whether the principal understands how children learn, works to create a sense of community in the school, encourages teachers to take risks and try new methods, and is committed to shared decision making. Taken as a set, these items represent critical facets of the principal's role in transforming the school into a high performing organization.[11]

We combined the teachers' responses to these different questions to create an overall indicator of principal leadership. The overwhelming majority of teachers (approximately three-

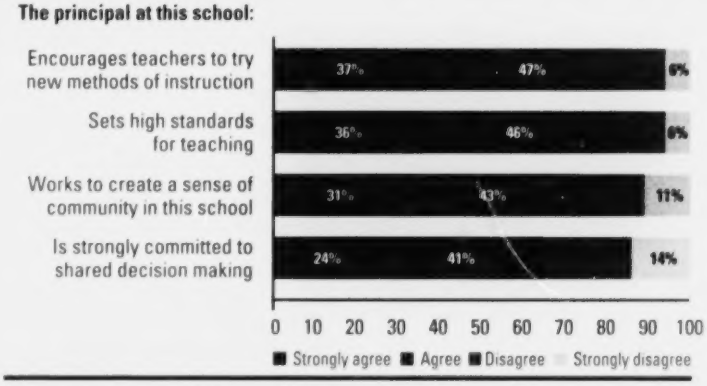
fourths) rate their principals highly. Nine percent of teachers hold their principal in *very high regard*. These teachers strongly agree that their principals are promoting all of the positive practices mentioned above. Another 21 percent of teachers show *high regard* for their principals. They strongly agree with some of these statements and agree with the others. The *moderately high regard* group, consisting of 44 percent of all teachers, are slightly less enthusiastic. They tend to agree with all of the statements but do not strongly agree with any of them. Even though these are somewhat more guarded assessments of school leadership than the first two categories, they are nonetheless still quite positive.

It is only in the *low regard* group, 26 percent of teachers, that genuinely negative comments appear. While these teachers agree that the principal encourages parental involvement and wants teachers to try new methods, they do not endorse any of the other statements about their principal. These teachers do not see their principal as promoting high standards, for example, nor do they see their principal facilitating a broad involvement in school improvement.

Principal Leadership Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Principal Leadership
Elementary and High School Teachers



Over 80 percent of the teachers see their principals encouraging new methods and high standards. Somewhat fewer, though a clear majority, indicate principals work to create a sense of community in the school and are committed to shared decision making.

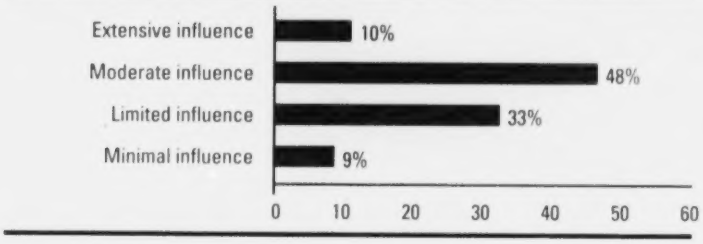
Teacher Influence

Teachers are also important leaders for school improvement. If they do not play an active part in the reform process and do not feel a real ownership for the changes that result, it is unlikely that these changes will culminate in meaningful improvements for students.[12]

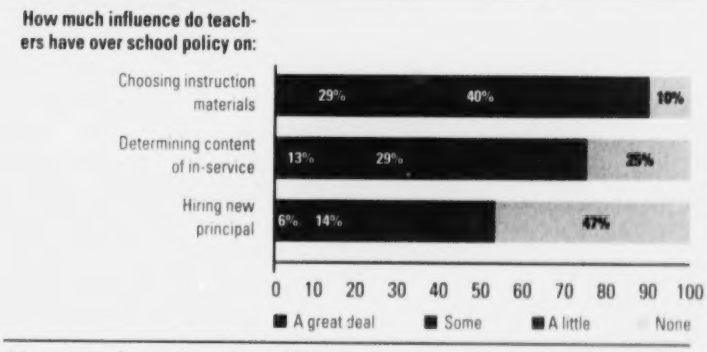
The survey asked teachers about the extent of their involvement in school decision making, including how much influence they have over classroom issues, such as selecting instructional materials, and over larger issues, such as setting the school schedule, planning in-service programs, budgeting, and hiring the principal and new faculty. We also enquired more generally about their ability to affect important school decisions, their informal opportunities for influence, and whether they feel comfortable voicing concerns.

About 10 percent of the teachers report having *extensive influence* in their schools. These teachers believe that they have a great deal of influence over classroom decisions, and a fair

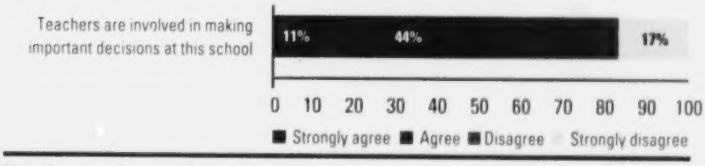
Teacher Influence Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Teacher Influence
Elementary and High School Teachers



Note: On the survey, the middle two categories were listed as "3" and "2." Here we provide the titles "some" and "a little" respectively.



Teachers indicate they have the most influence over choosing materials for their classroom. They have less influence on the choice of in-service programs and have the least impact on hiring a new principal. In general, over half the teachers agree *that they are involved in making important decisions at the school.*

amount of influence over larger school issues including budgeting and hiring decisions. They are also very involved in important school decisions and feel very comfortable voicing their concerns about the school. The largest group of teachers, about 48 percent, exert *moderate influence*. They report a fair amount of control over classroom decisions, but only some effect on larger school issues.

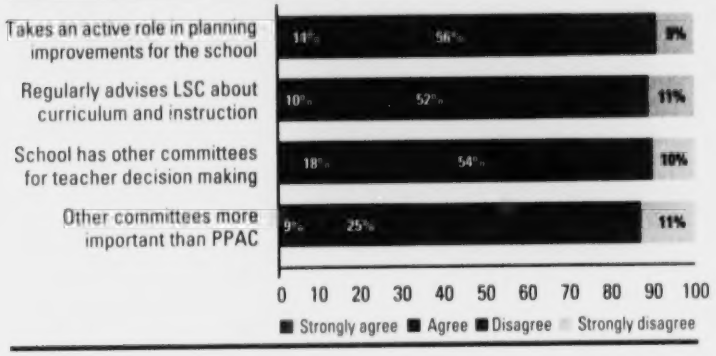
Approximately 33 percent of the teachers report more *limited influence* in their schools. A key difference for these teachers is that they do not feel comfortable voicing their concerns in the school. This item is an important indicator of a teacher's willingness to engage with others in a collective process. When teachers are afraid of raising issues or concerns, it signals a weak faculty base for school improvement.

At the low end of the scale, 9 percent report *minimal influence*. Although these teachers have some discretion over classroom decisions, they have almost no influence over larger issues, feel that important decisions are made without their input, and are not comfortable voicing their concerns.

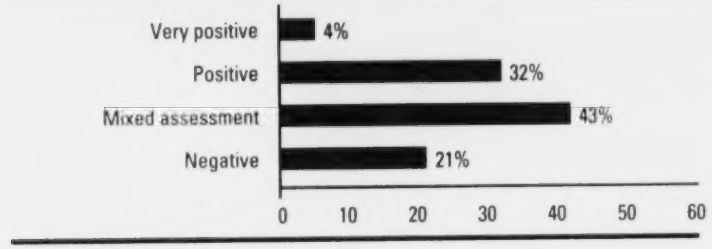
The 1988 School Reform Act created a specific structure, the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee, to provide for greater teacher involvement in school decision making. The PPAC was to advise the principal and LSC on important curricular and instructional matters.

The survey contained a few questions about teachers' involvement in the PPAC (see graph on page 18). About 70 percent of the teachers *agree* or *strongly agree* that the PPAC takes an active role in school planning, and more than 60 percent *agree* that the PPAC regularly advises the LSC about curricular issues. We interpret this as relatively high marks for the

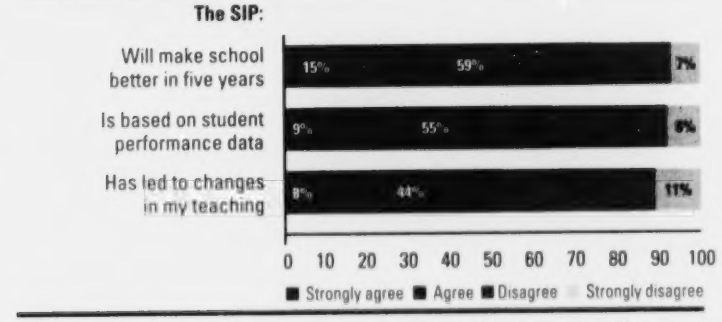
Importance of the PPAC
Elementary and High School Teachers



SIP Implementation
Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about the School Improvement Plan
Elementary and High School Teachers



Three-quarters of the teachers are confident that the SIP will improve the school in the next five years, and a little over half claim that the SIP takes student test data into account. Less than half report that the SIP has affected their own teaching.

PPAC, especially given how little external support was provided for PPAC development in the earlier years of reform.

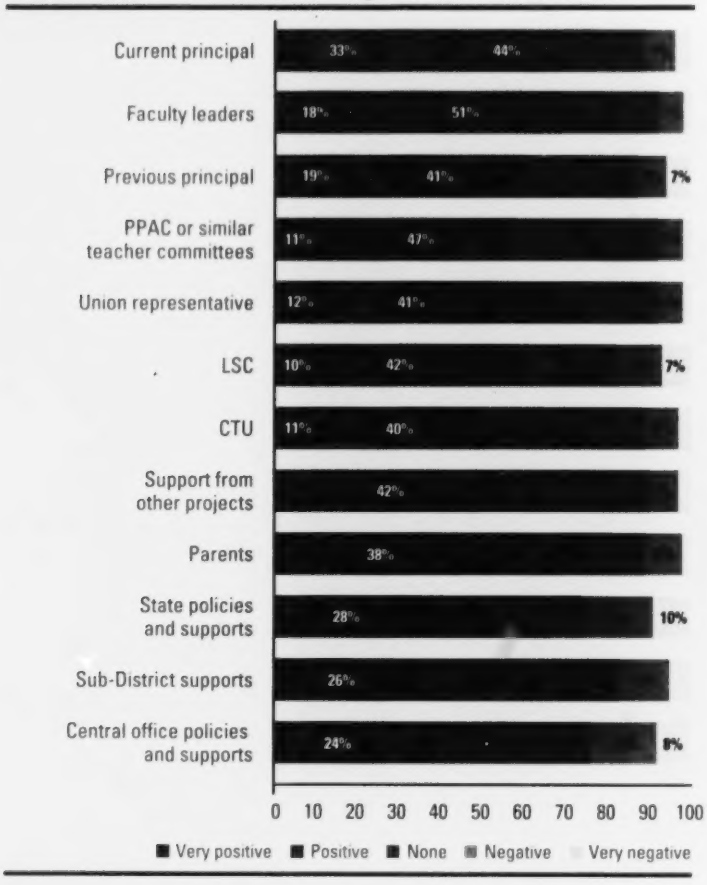
It is also important to recognize that the PPAC is not the only available structure for teacher involvement in many schools. In fact, more than 70 percent of the teachers indicate that there are other committees, besides the PPAC, in which teachers make decisions about the school. Less than one-third of the teachers, however, indicate that these other committees are more important than the PPAC. Thus, a broad array of structures appear to exist in most schools for teacher input. The PPAC is clearly a central structure, but not the only one.

We do note that a significant minority of teachers, between a quarter and a third, indicate that none of these committees are operative in their school. Thus, the opportunities for teacher leadership, although widespread, are not fully institutionalized across the school system.

School Improvement Plan

The school develops a School Improvement Plan each spring. This document is intended to be a blueprint for efforts to meet the needs of students and to improve operations and outcomes. Teachers were asked a series of questions about how the SIP is generated and the extent to which it provides a real focus for the school's improvement efforts. We

Impact of Each Factor on Educational Improvements in the School Elementary and High School Teachers



enquired about teachers' familiarity with the SIP, their personal involvement in its development, and whether it was based on an analysis of data on student performance. We also asked whether they thought that the SIP had led to changes in their teaching, was improving student learning, and would make their school better over the next five years.

About 40 percent of the teachers are *positive* or *very positive* about the SIP and its potential benefits for them and their students. These teachers endorse all of the items above, even agreeing that the SIP has led to changes in their own teaching.

About another forty percent of the teachers give the SIP a *mixed assessment*. They are familiar with the SIP and believe that it will make the school better over the next five years, but the SIP has not yet resulted in changes in their own teaching. Finally, 21 percent of teachers are clearly *negative*. They do not see the SIP as integral to the school and are not positive about its impact.

Individual and Organizational Impacts on Local Improvement Efforts

Teachers were asked to rate the impact on local school improvement efforts of 12 different individuals and organizations, including the current and former principal, faculty leaders and teacher groups such as the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), the LSC, central and subdistrict offices, state policy, and other outside organizations and projects.

Here, again, we find more testimony from teachers endorsing their principal's efforts to improve the school. More than three-quarters of the teachers indicate that the current principal has a *positive* or *very positive* impact on educational improvements. (About 60 percent offer similar endorsements for the previous principal.) These results are quite consistent with the high regard that most teachers hold for their principal, which was noted earlier.

The next most positive appraisals go to faculty leaders (more than two-thirds positive ratings). It is interesting that these individuals receive somewhat more favorable assessments than some of the key organizational structures through which they might work. Only

about 50 percent of the teachers indicate that their union representatives, the PPAC, and the CTU have had a positive impact in this regard.

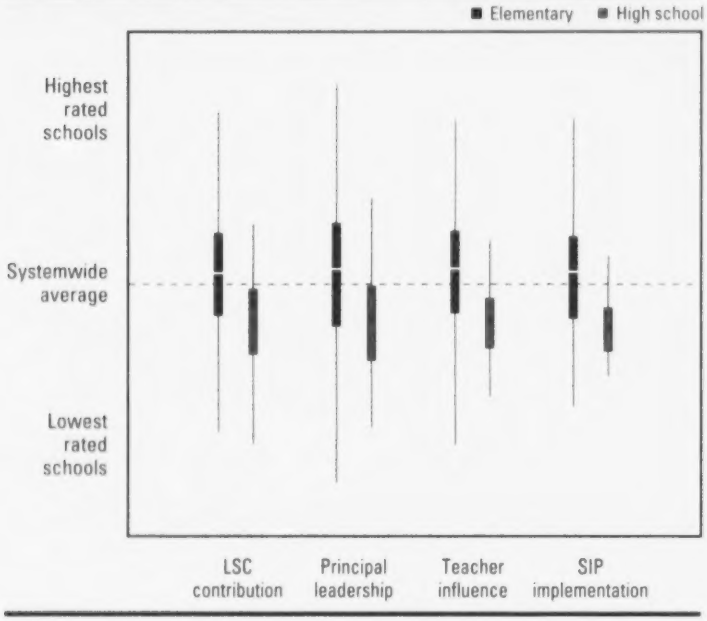
A similar appraisal (52 percent positive) is offered for the Local School Council. The negative assessments associated with the LSC (18 percent either *negative* or *very negative*), however, are somewhat higher than for the previous categories. This suggests the presence of more adversarial relations between teachers and their LSC in a small number of schools. The proportion of teachers offering such negative ratings is similar to findings from our 1991 elementary school survey.

Parents receive lukewarm responses with about as many teachers saying that parents have no impact on educational improvements as saying that they have a positive effect. Slightly more positive comments are offered about outside projects and agencies, where almost 50 percent of the teachers offer positive testimony. These numbers are actually quite high since such projects are not equally accessible to all schools, and presumably the most positive ratings are from schools where they are present in a significant degree.

In contrast to the relatively high positive ratings for outside agencies and projects are the much more negative marks given to state policy (only 32 percent positive), the subdistricts (30 percent positive), and the central office (27 percent positive). About half of the teachers indicate that these three entities have no impact on local educational improvement. These findings are quite telling, in that both the central CPS administration and the state department of education describe themselves as providing support and assistance to schools. There appears to be a significant gap between these offices' intentions and teachers' experiences. Interestingly, of all the factors considered, state policy receives the highest negative ratings (i.e., 27 percent *negative* or *very negative*). We suspect that this is primarily a reflection of teachers' reactions to the state quality review process which is a major element of state policy that schools experience directly.

In general, school-based actors tend to receive more positive marks than those distant from the schools. The extra-school governance apparatus—subdistricts, districts, and the state—receive the strongest criticism. From the

School Leadership
Distribution of School Indicators



perspective of teachers, much more needs to be done by these external units to become more supportive of local reform.

Comparisons of Elementary and High Schools

The differences that we observed earlier between elementary and high school teachers on recent changes and effects of reform also hold true for the specific components of local school leadership considered in this section. High school teachers are generally less positive about their LSCs, their principal, their own influence on decision making in their school, and about the implementation of their School Improvement Plan.

In order to characterize the differences among schools, we have again computed aggregate indicators of school performance, based on the average responses of teachers within the schools. We note that elementary schools vary considerably on these school leadership indicators—some are very high and others are quite low. These results are consistent with our 1993 findings on the state of school reform. Effective local school governance has been institutionalized in many but not all elementary schools. Some elementary schools have been "left behind by reform."

In contrast to the great variability among elementary schools, high schools tend to cluster at the lower end. This pattern is most marked for SIP implementation. Even in the most positive high schools, the teacher reports are comparable to the average elementary school.

In order to illustrate the considerable differences between elementary and high schools, we present bar graphs on the next page that compare the responses of teachers about their SIP in the most and least positive elementary and high schools. (The responses from all teachers in all schools is shown as a standard for overall comparison.) In the bottom quarter of the elementary schools almost half of teachers give the SIP a *mixed assessment*, over one-third are clearly *negative*, and relatively few offer any positive testimony.

In contrast, in the top quarter of the elementary schools, the distribution shifts considerably toward the positive end, with a majority of teachers offering either *positive* or *very positive* endorsements. Teachers in these schools see the SIP as central to their improvement efforts and are convinced that it will make the school better over the next five years.

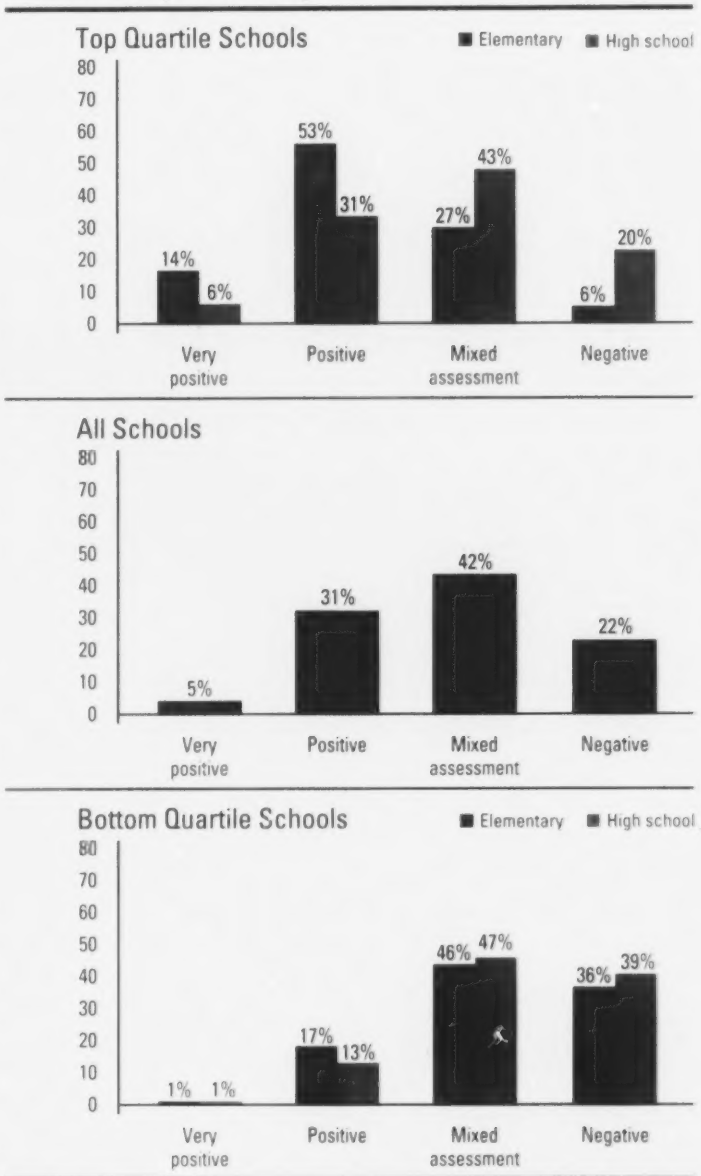
The top quarter in the high schools, however, looks more like the bottom quarter of the elementary schools. Among top rated high schools, an overwhelm-

ing majority of teachers still offer *mixed* and *negative assessments*. Only 37 percent of these high school teachers provide positive comments about the SIP and its role in local school improvement.

Although the differences between elementary and high schools are most distinct for SIP implementation, similar patterns appear for the other dimensions of local school governance—principal leadership, teacher influence, and LSC effectiveness. In general, it appears that the specific structures created by the Chicago School Reform Act to promote greater engagement of local leadership in improvement efforts have not taken as deep root in high schools as in elementary schools. In this sense, school reform has been a weaker "treatment" for high schools than for elementary schools. It does not appear to have had the same catalyzing force for change.

Moreover, the pattern observed here for local school governance also appears in subsequent sections where we focus on parent involvement and professional development and community. Thus, the results presented in this section generalize more broadly. A significant proportion of elementary schools appear to be moving forward in very positive ways under reform. Successes among the high schools, however, are much harder to find, regardless of which specific aspect of school operations we may choose to consider.

SIP Implementation
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

Section III

Parent Involvement

Parents play a critical role in their children's education. They are their children's first and most important teachers. Ample research evidence documents the importance of sustaining this parental involvement as their children move into the school years.[1] Parents' involvement is crucial both in encouraging children's learning at home and supporting teachers' efforts at school. Students learn more when parents take an interest in their schoolwork and encourage persistent efforts. Similarly, teachers are more effective when parents reinforce their endeavors at school. In contrast, in the absence of such encouragement at home and support at school, student learning suffers.

To understand how students and teachers view the role of parents in school life, we developed a number of questions about student, parent, and teacher relationships. Students were asked about the conversations they have with their parents and other adults with whom they live[4] regarding school, their own school work, and their plans for the future. Teachers also answered questions about the direct engagement of parents in the school, particularly the instances when parents come to school to pick up report cards, attend parent conferences and other events, help out in the classroom, or raise money for school needs.

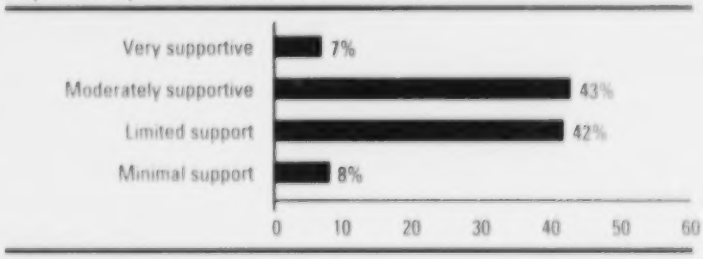
We were also interested in what schools might be doing to promote parent involvement more actively. Teachers were asked several questions concerning their beliefs about parents and their efforts to engage them in school life. We inquired about how teachers make parents feel comfortable, communicate with them, work to build trust, and let them know what support is needed to advance the school mission.

Parents' Involvement in Students' Learning at Home

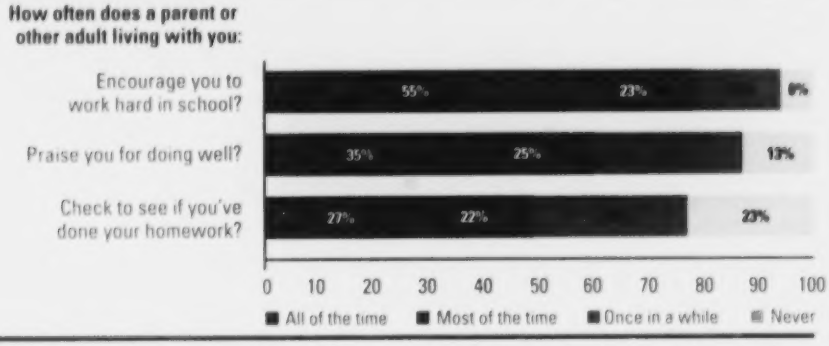
About half the students describe their parents as *very* or *moderately supportive*. According to students, *very supportive* parents always encourage them to work hard, praise them for doing well, check if they have done their homework and, most of the time, help with homework. *Moderately supportive* parents are similar, except students say their parents do these things most of the time instead of all the time.

Less parental involvement characterizes the remaining half of the students. Forty-two percent of students' responses suggest *limited support*, where parents, or other adults they live with, encourage them most of the time but check on their homework or help with homework only once in a while. Eight percent of the students indicate only *minimal support*. In these cases, parents encourage them and provide praise once in a while but never check that they are doing their homework or help with it.

Parents' Involvement in Students' Learning at Home
Reported by 6th, 8th, and 10th Graders



Selected Questions about Parents' Involvement in Students' Learning at Home 6th, 8th, and 10th Graders



Parents more frequently exhort students to work hard than provide praise or check to see that the homework is being done. Almost 80 percent of the students report that their parents encourage hard work most or all of the time*; somewhat fewer, 60 percent, say that they regularly receive praise; and fewer yet, 49 percent, indicate that their parents regularly check homework.*

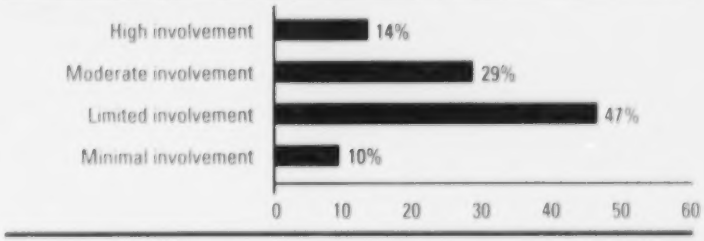
These rather weak reports from about half of the students about their parents' involvement are worrisome. Parents exercise considerable influence on students' motivations and habits. A greater engagement of parents and other significant adults at home in children's education provides a clear avenue for increasing student performance. For many students, however, this remains an untapped resource. Clearly, significant challenges lie ahead for Chicago in this regard.

Parents' Involvement with the School

Reports from elementary school teachers about parents' involvement with the school parallel those from students about their parents' involvement at home.[11] Less than half of the teachers report extensive involvement from parents; more than half indicate their students' parents are only weakly engaged. Specifically, only 14 percent of the teachers report *high involvement* of their students' parents. For these teachers, nearly all their students' parents attend parent-teacher conferences when they are requested, most attend school events, and at least some volunteer in the classroom. Twenty-nine percent of the teachers report *moderate involvement*, meaning most of the parents come to parent-teacher conferences and about half attend school events.

The largest group of teachers, 47 percent, indicate only *limited involvement* of parents. About half of the parents of the students they teach attend parent-teacher conferences, even fewer come to school events, and none help out as volunteers. Ten percent of the teachers' responses suggest *minimal involvement*. Less than half of the parents of students in these classes engage in the most mini-

Parents' Involvement with the School Reported by Elementary School Teachers

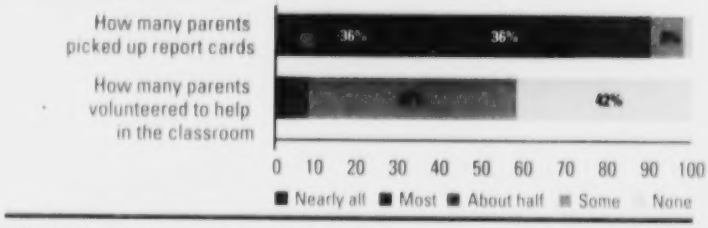


mal form of parental involvement with the school—picking up their child's report card.

Teachers' Outreach to Parents

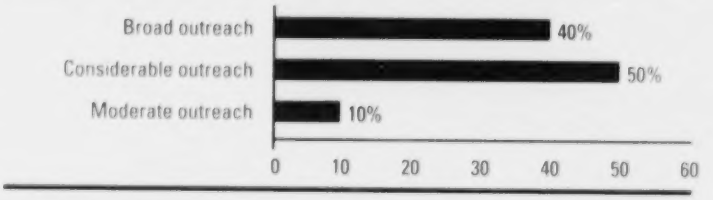
We now shift attention to the school's effort to promote greater parental engagement in their children's schooling. Elementary and high school teachers' overall responses suggest very strong commitment to improving parent involvement. Forty percent indicate efforts at *broad outreach* on their part. These teachers strongly agree that in their school parents are greeted warmly, are encouraged to provide feedback, and are invited to visit classrooms. They also feel that the school is working to build trusting relationships with parents and is collaborating closely with parents to meet students' needs. An additional 50 percent of the teachers may be identified in the *considerable outreach* category. They indicate that their school exhibits the above qualities, although their responses typically fall into the agree rather than strongly agree range. We classify the remaining 10 percent of the teachers' responses as *moderate outreach*. These teachers are actually quite similar to the others, except they acknowledge that they do not feel their school works closely with parents to meet students' needs. The latter practice requires significant time commitment and effort, and probably for this reason was generally endorsed less often.

Selected Questions About Parents' Involvement with the School Reported by Elementary School Teachers

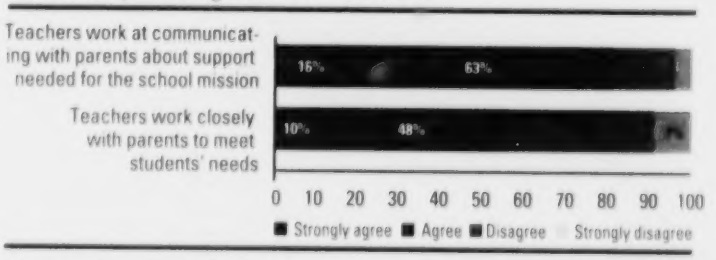


The CPS asks parents or other adults representing students to pick up their student's report card at the school. Thus, it is no surprise that the most common form of parent involvement is picking up the report card. A little over 70 percent of the teachers report that most or nearly all of their students' parents come to school for the report cards; the rest indicate that half or fewer of the parents do so. (Because teachers may not be aware of the parents who collect the report card in the school office, their estimates may be too low.) When asked about volunteers in the classroom, half the teachers indicate that some parents come in to help, and 42 percent said that no parents volunteer.

Teachers' Outreach to Parents
Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Teachers' Outreach to Parents
Elementary and High School Teachers



Almost 80 percent of teachers report communicating with parents to solicit their support for the school's mission. Only 58 percent claim they work closely with parents to meet students' needs.

We note that these reports about teachers' efforts reaching out to parents are quite discrepant from the reports about parents' efforts to support learning both at home and at school. Part of this difference results from the fact that teachers were the respondents about the school's outreach efforts, and they naturally tend to describe their own activities in more positive terms than others might. It is unfortunate that we do not have direct reports from parents about how inviting and inclusive the school is from their perspective. Even so, the reports from many students of limited parental support at home does lend at least some credence to teachers' claims that their efforts to engage parents are not always reciprocated.

At a minimum, this pattern of results indicates that increasing the involvement of parents in their children's education merits greater school community attention and external support. We should not underestimate the importance of positive developments in this area. In their absence, other school efforts to advance student learning are likely to be frustrated. Constructive developments here will require sustained efforts by school leaders, policy makers, the media, community and religious organizations, and the parents themselves. Effective solutions are unlikely to be simple. To some extent, parents' ability to support their children's learning is limited by job demands as one or two parents struggle to make ends meet while taking care of a family. At the same time, it is a question of schools reaching out for better

strategies to communicate, new ways to bridge cultural and language gaps, and more appropriate activities that sustain engagement.[16] Fortunately, teachers indicate a willingness to do this. How to accomplish this effectively is another matter.

Comparisons between Elementary and Secondary Schools

There is very little difference between elementary and secondary schools in students' reports about their parents' involvement in their learning. In general, tenth-grade students are just as likely as sixth- and eighth-grade students to report encouragement, interest, and support from their parents.

With respect to teachers' outreach to parents, however, large differences emerge between elementary and high schools. Average scores on this indicator for high schools are significantly lower than those from elementary schools. Reports from almost all of the high schools resemble those from the lowest quarter of elementary schools. In fact, the top-rated high schools are well below the average elementary school.

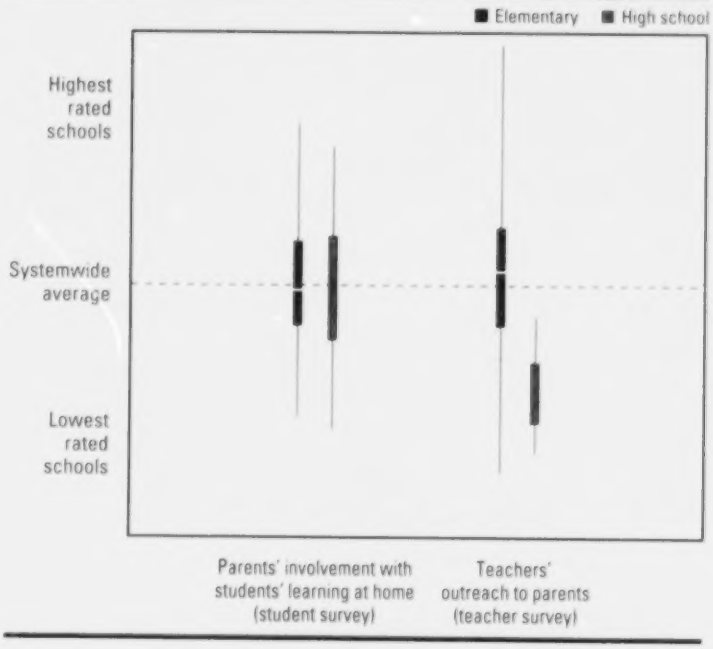
Although most teachers register a strong commitment to parent outreach, there is much less inclination among high school teachers. The specialization of teaching at the high school level greatly complicates any such efforts. The typical high school teacher may encounter 100 to 150 different students each day, which is several times more than most elementary teachers. Beyond these logistical problems, many high school teachers believe there is little they can do to stimulate interest and involvement of their students' parents.[17]

To the extent that such views are shared by Chicago's high school teachers, this poses a significant challenge to future improvements in this area.

High school is a critical juncture when many Chicago students are in the process of dropping out. It is also the time when powerful peer influences often work against the school's mission. Thus, finding ways to strengthen parents' roles and forge a real partnership between them and the school staff can be a major support in efforts to advance students' learning.

More generally, Chicago's school reform aims to promote greater responsiveness by schools to parents and the local community. Parent involvement, not only in the governance of affairs of the school, but also directly in the education of their own children, is a key objective in this regard. While many teachers report improvements here over the past three years (see Section I, "Teachers' Overall Assessment of School Improvement"), the data presented in this section indicate that much more still needs to be done.

Parent Involvement
Distribution of School Indicators



Imani School: An Evolving Professional Community

We introduce this next section with a story about "Imani" Elementary School, which has been working toward professional community over the last few years. As part of the Consortium's three-year study of the Classroom Effects of Reform, the experiences in this school illustrate the long-term efforts required to bring a faculty together and the leadership and professional development necessary to make a school a genuine learning community. ***"Imani" is a pseudonym for an actual school.***

It has been two years since Imani Elementary lost its dynamic and immensely popular principal to retirement. Since then, teachers at the school have been working to adapt to the leadership style of their new principal and to implement new instructional programs that they hope will improve their students' achievements. A few have reacted negatively to the changes. Imani is a small school that is further divided into very small schools-within-a-school, so tensions are quickly felt by all. But most teachers have tabled their differences to work together on school development. They have tenaciously held onto their goal of making their school one of the most successful in the city.

A strong orientation to staff development has been at the heart of it. Imani's past and present principals have encouraged teachers to continue their education and have offered funds for conferences and workshops. Imani has been equally active about bringing visiting teachers, consultants, and university faculty into the school to work with staff in their classrooms and in their schools-within-a-school. For three years, Imani teachers have been working with a local university and members of the Accelerated Schools network to fundamentally change the expectations placed on their students and themselves.

Through these professional development experiences, teachers have become more willing to evaluate their teaching assumptions and practices and to experiment with new ideas. This has led to significant changes in language arts and math instruction, the development of a writing program, training in hands-on science activities, new assessment methods, and a teacher-developed curriculum with greater emphasis on active student learning. This past year, for example, primary-grade students created herbariums and planted trees as part of their science program; second- and fifth-grade students published and sold poetry books as part of a young entrepreneurs program; and eighth graders wrote and produced a play. Next year a group of Imani teachers will join a network of urban educators in implementing an interdisciplinary curriculum designed by a local urban education center. Staff from the center will work with Imani teachers throughout the year to help them implement the curriculum and develop new student assessments.

Whether teachers are learning outside the school or working with consultants inside their own classrooms, most Imani teachers have been learning and trying new forms of instruction with their students. Thus, the knowledge base and instructional capacity of the school has been steadily growing.

Determining the best way to coordinate this development has been an ongoing experiment. How do teachers strike a balance between time spent in classrooms instructing students and time spent in development activities with other teachers? Is it best to meet as a whole staff or in small groups?

Imani has tried several strategies in searching for the best mix. Most teachers have found weekly school-within-a-school meetings most helpful. These meetings support teachers to work together to design thematic curriculum units and interdisciplinary assignments, to organize field trips and special assemblies, and to discuss the progress of their students. This year, the English, math, social studies, and science teachers in Imani's middle school developed a new instructional unit on the concept and experience of family. They developed lessons, worked to integrate state goals into them, debated how topics would be introduced, and learned that working together, while time-consuming, was productive and rewarding.

As part of the unit, students read *A Raisin in the Sun* and other stories about families, wrote about and discussed real-life experiences, and explored the world of adult responsibilities. Students adopted different jobs and careers and, using their math skills, had to develop and manage a family budget consistent with their salary. They also studied human biology, reproduction, and DNA. Developing the lessons, coordinating them, and weaving together the best sequence of student tasks and assessments required much teacher time, deliberation, and, on occasion, compromise. But the process of sharing important ideas and debating choices benefitted both teachers and students. The new unit was substantive, demanding considerably more academic engagement than the drill and practice sheets it replaced; and students clearly found it interesting.

Imani teachers are also playing a greater role in school leadership. Imani uses a leadership team involving teacher representatives from each school-within-a-school, plus other interested staff, to articulate the school's mission and to make many key decisions. This year the group has facilitated a self-analysis process and has worked with the principal and parents to develop their School Improvement Plan.

These interactions have not evolved without conflict. Recently, some teachers began to feel that the small school meetings were fragmenting the staff and eroding a sense of unity; they wanted more whole staff meetings. Efforts to accommodate both needs resulted in some frustrating shifts in scheduling. By spring, increasing tensions led teachers to call a full staff meeting. They asked an external facilitator to help them air frustrations and grievances. It was a difficult and often emotional meeting, but teachers worked hard to resolve their conflicts and address the issues that confronted them as a staff. They renewed their commitment to professional dialogue and tried to design a better mix of whole- and sub-group meetings. The meeting illustrated an important attribute of the staff—their persistence. The adage, "if at first you don't succeed..." is practiced regularly at Imani.

Imani serves one of the most impoverished areas of the city, and the demands placed on teachers have intensified since reform. Yet the "can do" spirit of the staff has grown alongside new demands. There is no doubt that an improved base of fiscal and administrative supports, provided by state Chapter 1 funds, has motivated teachers to invest themselves in their school and their students. Also, Imani is fortunate in that it is located in a large building with ample space for student and teacher work. But the centerpiece of the school's vitality and improvement efforts is its commitment to professional development and building a professional community that maintains focus on strengthening the school's instructional programs. Imani is not free of problems, and its students still have much to achieve. But its progress is real, and its future is brighter than it was before.

Section IV

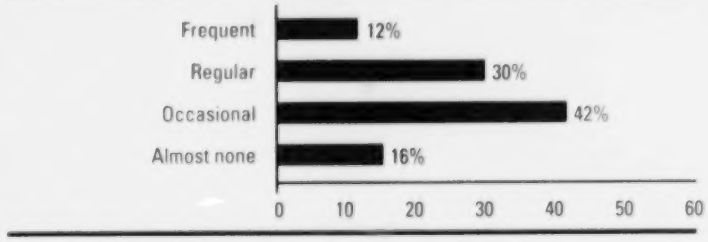
Professional Community and Orientation

National educational reform efforts call for more challenging academic standards for all students.[18] Just a decade ago, most Americans might have been satisfied with higher levels of basic skills and lower drop-out rates; now, all schools are increasingly being judged against "world-class" standards.[19] To attain this will require profound changes in teaching. It is argued that teachers need a much greater knowledge of subject matter, the mental processes occurring in the mind of the learner, and the understanding and experiences that students bring to this.[20] It will also require fundamental change in the nature of the schools as workplaces for teachers. If schools are to be more effective, active learning environments for students, they must also have this character for teachers. Only if teachers become more collectively responsible for student learning, is there any possibility of attaining world-class standards on a broad scale.

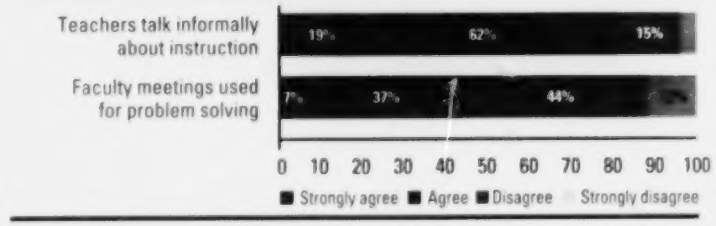
WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY?

Three core activities characterize adult behavior in a professional community.[21] Regular opportunities for reflective dialogue engage teachers in conversations that hold practice, pedagogy, and student learning under scrutiny. Complementing this is a deprivatization of practice where teachers open their classroom doors and share their work with peers. Through these observations and follow-up discussions, joint problem solving becomes common. This in turn leads to a third key characteristic—peer collaboration. Through engaging in shared

Reflective Dialogue Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Reflective Dialogue
Elementary and High School Teachers



Teachers differ in the extent to which they participate in school-based discussions. About 80 percent agree *or* strongly agree *that teachers engage in informal conversations about instruction. In contrast, only 44 percent express the same level of agreement on the utility of formal faculty meetings. The discrepancy in these figures suggests a split between the informal efforts of teachers to improve their practice and the specific opportunities formally provided by the school. Schools may need to invest more time and resources to create useful forums for professional discourse.*

work, teachers can learn from each other and continue to develop the skills, knowledge, and ideas necessary for continuous school improvement.

Rather than "working to rules," teachers' efforts in a professional community are guided by a set of shared beliefs and values, central to which is a focus on student learning. When such beliefs and values are broadly held, they create a normative environment that governs adult behavior in the school and promotes strong commitments to student welfare and improved learning.

When these five key features combine together, they create a distinctive workplace for teachers which we call a professional community. This section of the report examines the prevalence of these five features in Chicago elementary and secondary schools. It also considers teachers' access to professional support for this development and three key consequences for teachers that are associated with it: their orientation toward innovation, collective responsibility for student learning, and school commitment.

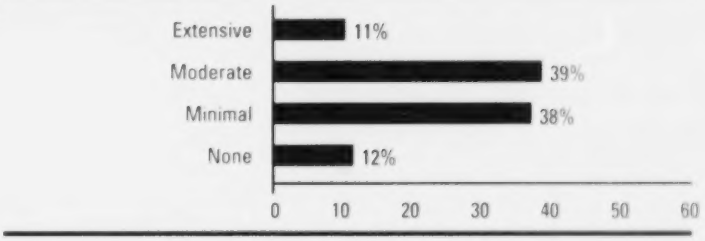
Reflective Dialogue

Strong professional communities are built by teachers who regularly engage in conversations with colleagues about their work. Teachers in these communities use discussion and critique as tools to promote self-awareness and to build a common core of ideas, values, and beliefs about effective practice, pedagogy, student learning, and the conditions of good schooling.

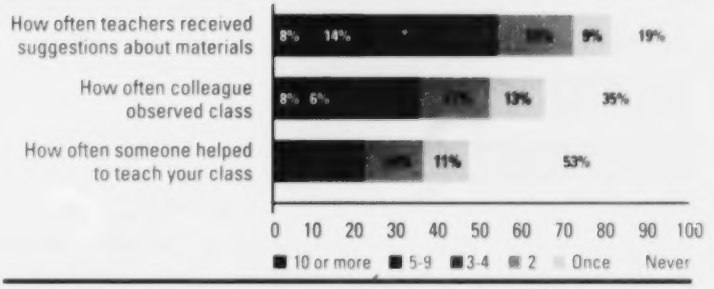
Twelve percent of Chicago's teachers can be characterized as participating in *frequent* or daily conversations with colleagues. These teachers find faculty meetings useful for problem solving. They discuss the management of classroom behavior, new curriculum, and school goals almost every day. Another 30 percent participate in *regular* dialogue with their peers. For these teachers, instructional conversations are occurring on a weekly basis.

In contrast, 42 percent of teachers perceive faculty meetings as unproductive and engage in professional dialogue only *occasionally* (i.e., about two to three times a month). Sixteen percent

Deprivatization Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Deprivatization
Elementary and High School Teachers



More than half the respondents, 54 percent, report that they receive useful suggestions about materials from their colleagues at least three times during the year. Because practices associated with higher levels of deprivatization, such as allowing oneself to be observed by a peer and team teaching, require formally structured time and demand mutual respect and trust, they are less widespread. Only 35 percent of the teachers report that a colleague observed their class at least three times during the same period of time. A smaller proportion, 22 percent, report another teacher helped to teach their class three times or more.

of teachers report *almost no* professional conversations with colleagues. These teachers are isolated from professional interaction, working alone in their classrooms.

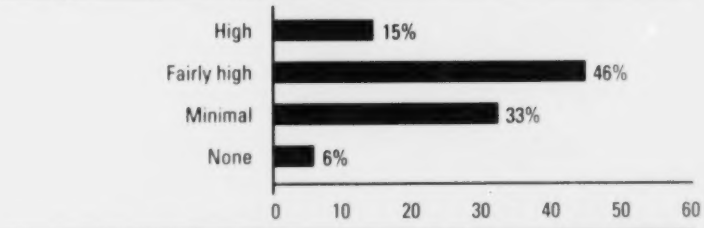
Deprivatization

A professional community also encourages teachers to deprivatize their practice. Through strategies such as team teaching and peer coaching, teachers share and observe each other's teaching methods and philosophies. This opening up of one's practice to scrutiny also encourages teachers to ask questions about their practice and to view it in a more analytic fashion.

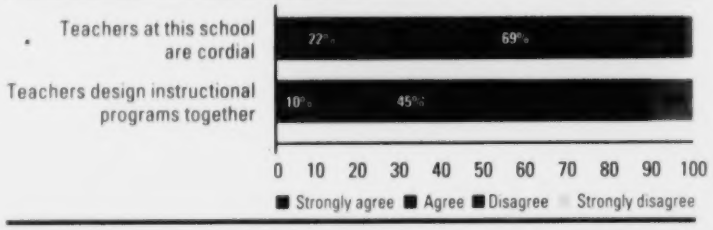
Fifty percent of teachers indicate *moderate* to *extensive* levels of deprivatization (see top graph on page 31). These teachers report that more than five times in the past year they received useful suggestions from their colleagues. On three or more occasions, they visited other teachers' classrooms, and had peers observe them teach. In addition, they invited a colleague to help teach their class at least once during the year. In opening their practice to others and regularly playing the role of mentor, advisor, and specialist, these teachers have advanced their expertise, individually and collectively.

In marked contrast, 12 percent of the teachers never requested, received, or provided assistance to their colleagues. For these teachers, instruction appears to be a solitary endeavor.

Peer Collaboration Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Peer Collaboration
Elementary and High School Teachers



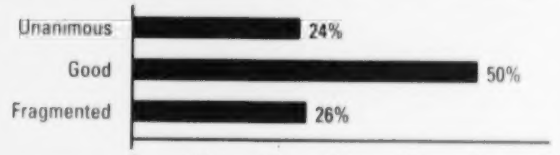
Ninety-one percent of the teachers agree *or* strongly agree *that faculty members are cordial. Thus, civil relations is a common characteristic of almost all Chicago schools. When we switch attention, however, to items that enquire about shared work, the picture appears quite different. For example, 45 percent of the teachers either* disagree *or* strongly disagree *that teachers collaborate to design instructional programs. This suggests, at best, a very modest level of collegial effort in many Chicago schools.*

Peer Collaboration

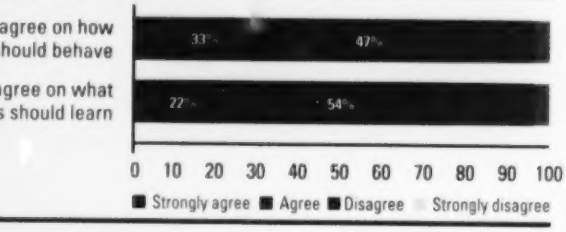
Cooperative relations are a critical component of a productive workplace. In its simplest form, cordiality and civility characterize the interactions among staff. This is a basic quality necessary to maintain associated work. In its more advanced form, teachers collaborate on school-wide projects and are broadly engaged in school improvement efforts. Through such interactions, teachers develop deeper understandings of students, each other, and their profession. Such collaboration can enhance teacher expertise and their subsequent contributions to school improvement.

About 60 percent of the teachers characterize the level of collaboration among faculty as *high* or *fairly high*. These teachers report good collegial ties as faculty work together to make the school run effectively, coordinate instruction, and design new programs. About 40 percent of the teachers, however, report *minimal* collegial ties or *none*. This group

Shared Norms Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Shared Norms
Elementary and High School Teachers



Teachers express more agreement about the behavior they expect of students than on academic standards and content. While 33 percent of teachers strongly agree *about how students should behave, only 22 percent express the same level of agreement regarding what students should learn in school.*

of teachers do not have positive relationships with their colleagues and do not feel that there is a collaborative work climate.

Shared Norms

The previous three areas focused on the core practices which characterize professional communities. We now shift our attention to the school norms, beliefs, and values which underlie these practices and bring coherence and integration to professional communities.

Almost three-quarters of Chicago Public School teachers report *unanimous* or *good* agreement among the faculty about how students should behave, what they should learn, and how hard they should work. In contrast, about a quarter indicate a *fragmented* faculty where norms pertaining to student behavior and academic standards are not widely shared. These teachers tend to disagree with the three questions about shared faculty norms concerning behavior, standards, and learning. Absent such norms, the practices of professional community are unlikely to flourish, and the quality of student experiences are quite uncertain.

Focus on Student Learning

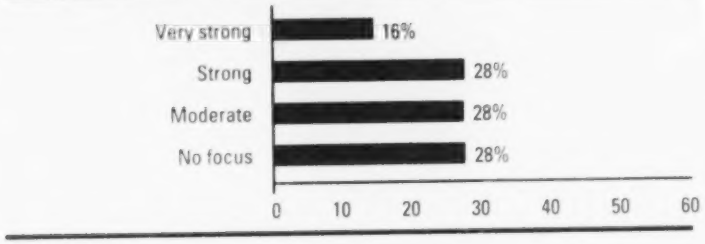
The core content of the values and beliefs in a professional community is its focus on student learning. Because teachers in these communities strongly believe that all students can learn, advancing the education of all students becomes the central concern. As such, teachers consistently evaluate choices and make decisions on the basis of their potential impact on student learning.

Forty-four percent of Chicago's teachers report that their schools have a *strong* or *very strong* focus on the academic and social aspects of student learning (see top graph on page 34). Teachers in these top two groups agree that professional actions and organizational decisions, including those concerned with the school schedule and academic standards, consistently aim to strengthen student learning. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers report a *moderate* focus on student learning. These teachers indicate that their schools emphasize academic learning but do not attend to developing students' social skills. Slightly more than a quarter of the teachers perceive their school as having *no focus* or being unsupportive of student learning. This group of teachers offers quite negative assessments of their schools.

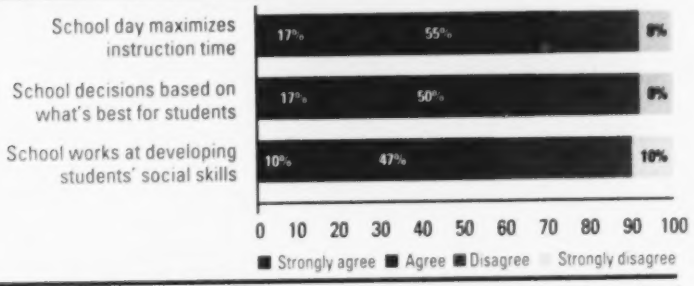
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A KEY RESOURCE

Teachers' access to new ideas is central if schools are to function as learning organizations where teachers are continuously trying

Focus on Student Learning
Elementary and High School Teachers

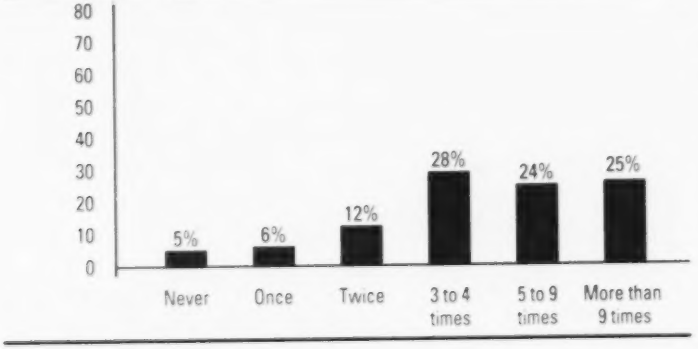


Selected Questions about Focus on Student Learning
Elementary and High School Teachers



Seventy-two percent of the teachers agree *or* strongly agree *that schools take steps to maximize instructional time. About two-thirds of the teachers indicate that school decisions are guided by what's best for student learning. A smaller proportion of teachers, 57 percent, feel that the school also works at promoting students' social skills.*

School-Based Professional Development - This Year
Elementary and Secondary Teachers

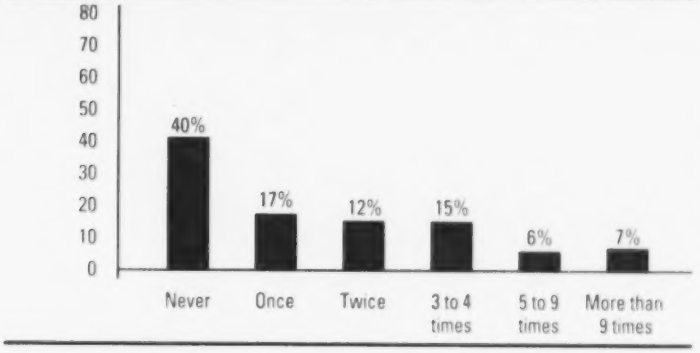


to improve. Because of rapid changes in the knowledge base in education, teachers must have access to new ideas and to expert peers. This is crucial if teachers are to learn how to build and maintain a more effective practice. Quality professional development opportunities are a key resource in this regard.

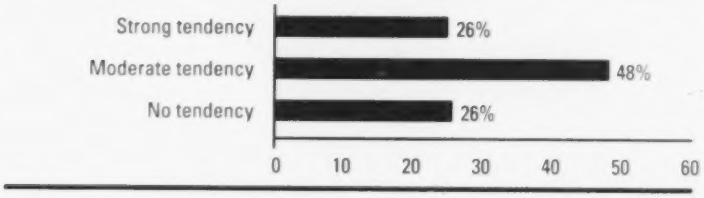
School-based professional development provides the major opportunity for teachers to learn together how to improve their practice. Almost 50 percent of the teachers report having participated in internal professional development activities at least five times during the year. Another 28 percent participated about three or four times. About one-quarter of the teachers reported that they participated less than three times a year.

External activities organized by agencies such as the teachers' union, CPS, universities, colleges, and professional groups present another avenue for professional development. These activities are typically more demanding of teachers because they often require individual initiative to arrange and a time commitment beyond the normal school day. Not surprisingly, participation in externally organized activities is less widespread. Some 40 percent of the teachers report never having participated at all. Fifteen percent participated about three or four times in the past year, while 13 percent participated at least five times.

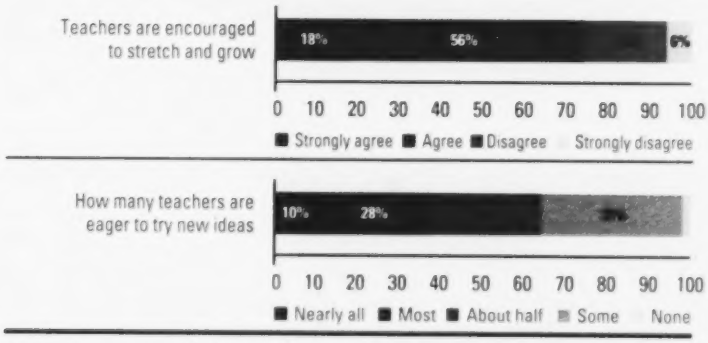
External Professional Development - This Year
Elementary and Secondary Teachers



Orientation to Innovation
Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Innovation
Elementary and High School Teachers



Over 70 percent of the teachers agree *or* strongly agree *that they are personally encouraged to stretch and grow. When asked about the faculty's orientation to engage such behavior, however, less than 40 percent indicate that* most *or* nearly all *of their colleagues are eager to try new ideas.*

KEY CONSEQUENCES FOR TEACHERS: A PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION

The interest in promoting greater professional community among a school faculty is in response to a wide range of observations about teachers' work. The research literature documents the reluctance of teachers to try new classroom methods, their limited commitment to engage change beyond the classroom, and the need for teachers to take broader responsibility for student learning.[22] School environments have typically discouraged innovation (even where existing practices are clearly not working) and promoted a laborer (rather than professional) mentality. Unless there are significant changes in teachers' conceptions of their work and personal commitments to it, it is hard to envision major improvements in student achievement.

For these reasons we decided to take a closer look at three key dimensions of teachers' commitments: their orientation to innovation, commitment to the school, and collective responsibility for student learning. Reforming schools as professional communities is explicitly intended to promote each of these because each is central to advancing student learning.[23]

Orientation to Innovation

A high performing workplace is a learning organization.[24] This

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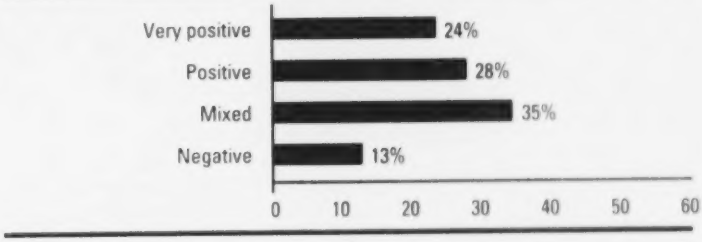
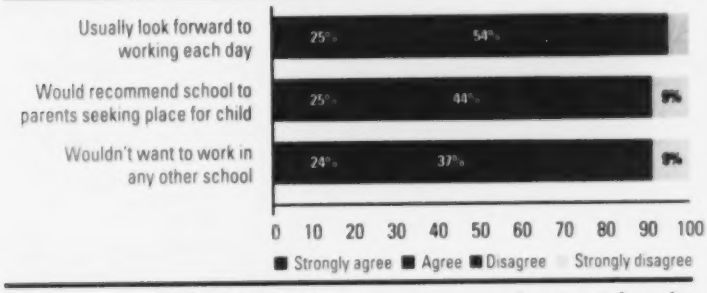
School Commitment Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about School Commitment
Elementary and High School Teachers



Almost 80 percent of the teachers agree *or* strongly agree *that they usually look forward to each working day at the school. About 70 percent indicate that they would recommend the school to parents seeking a place for their child, and about 60 percent endorse the statement that they wouldn't want to work in any other school. It is noteworthy that the most frequently selected category on each item is* agree, *rather than* strongly agree. *This suggests some qualification in teachers' endorsements—positive, yet at the same time, some reserve.*

means that teachers must be encouraged to engage new ideas and experiment with improving their practices. Significant changes, however, are unlikely unless teachers feel supported in their efforts to advance their professional knowledge and to base their decisions on new knowledge.

When a *strong tendency* to innovation exists within a school, most teachers are eager to try new ideas (see middle graph on page 35). Teachers also strongly agree that they continually learn, have a "can do" attitude, and that there is a general climate which encourages professional growth. About a quarter of the teachers report that their schools are like this.

Almost half of the teachers (48 percent) offer more *moderate* reports in which an openness to improvement and change is characteristic of some teachers in their schools. At the other end of the spectrum, 26 percent indicate that there is *no tendency* to innovation in their schools. These teachers report both that school-level support for innovation is lacking and that teachers are generally unwilling to try new ideas.

Commitment to the School

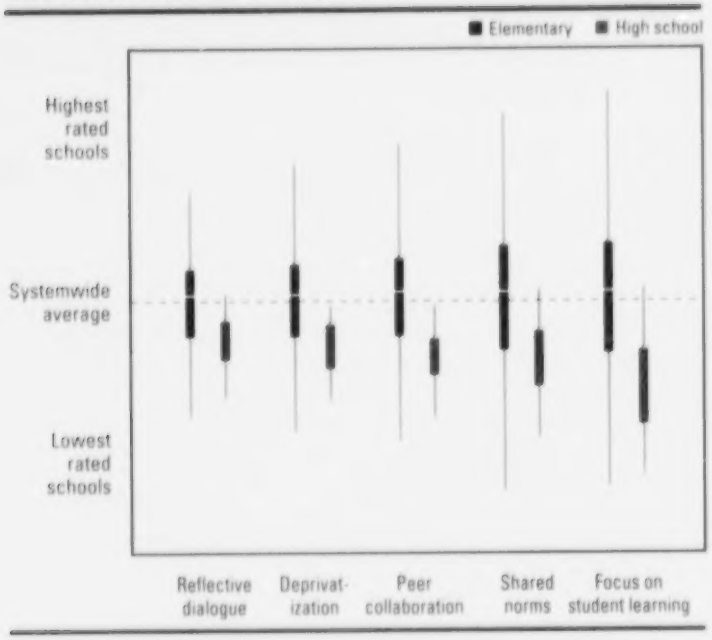
High performing workplaces elicit the personal commitments of staff to the organization and its core mission. In terms of schools, this means that teachers should feel loyalty to the school, enjoy working there, and speak well of the school to others.

Slightly over one-half of Chicago teachers express a *positive* or *very positive* orientation in this regard. They feel committed to their current school and offer positive testimony about it, such as a willingness to recommend it to parents looking for a place for their child. Another third of the teachers offer a more *mixed* assessment. While they claim loyalty to the school, they might prefer to teach somewhere else and would not necessarily recommend it to others. The remaining 13 percent offer clearly *negative* assessments. Teachers in this group did not endorse any of the items asked about school commitment.

Collective Responsibility

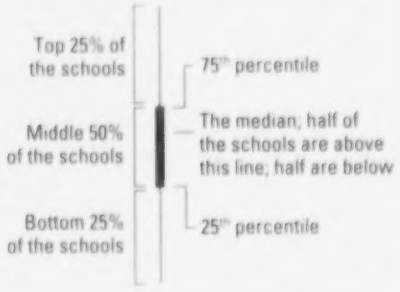
Most significant of all is the extent to which a professional community promotes shared responsibility among the faculty

Professional Community
Distribution of School Indicators



How to Read a Box Plot and Why We Use Them

The box plot details the relative frequency of positive and negative school reports. Each box (black for elementary schools and gray for high schools) encloses the middle 50 percent of the schools. The lines, called "whiskers", extending up and down from the box, show the range of scores for the top and bottom quartile schools. These are the highest and lowest performing schools on each particular scale. Within each profile, the scales are centered on the system-wide average for the schools that participated in the survey.


Top 25% of the schools
75th percentile
Middle 50% of the schools
The median; half of the schools are above this line; half are below
Bottom 25% of the schools
25th percentile

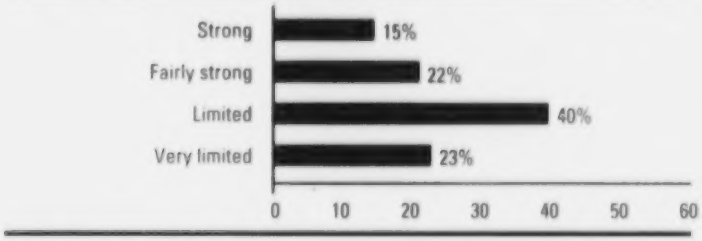
In substantive terms, these school level differences are very significant. We can see this most clearly by comparing the responses of teachers in elementary schools that are in the top and bottom quartiles on peer collaboration and focus on student learning. (Similar differences exist for the other three indicators as well.) We also present results from the top and bottom quartile high schools. Weaknesses in high school professional community are quite stark.

In the top quartile elementary schools on peer collaboration, over 90 percent of teachers report *high* or *fairly high* levels of collaboration. In these schools, most teachers are designing programs together and coordinating work. In fact, it is appropriate to describe this behavior as normative—peer collaboration characterizes the faculty as a whole. When individual teachers do not collaborate in these contexts, they clearly stand out as atypical.

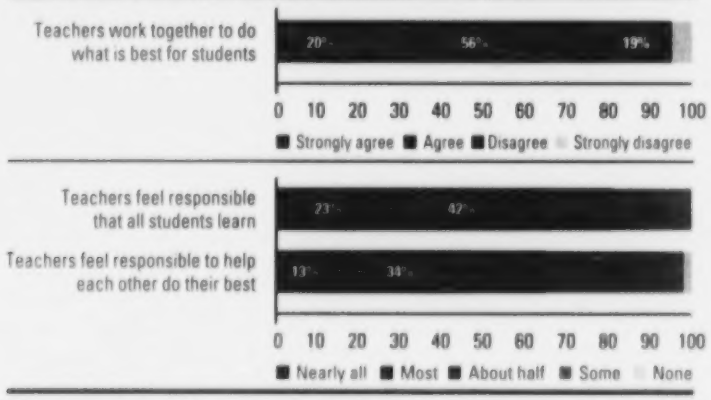
In contrast, in the bottom quarter of elementary and high schools on peer collaboration, only about 40 percent of the teachers offer positive reports. In these contexts, the majority of the teachers indicate *minimal* or no collaboration among faculty members. It is appropriate to say that in these schools teachers work in isolation from each other.

Similar differences characterize elementary and high school teachers' reports about the school's

Collective Responsibility
Elementary and High School Teachers



Selected Questions about Collective Responsibility
Elementary and High School Teachers


Teachers work together to do what is best for students
20%
56%
19%
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
Teachers feel responsible that all students learn
23%
42%
Teachers feel responsible to help each other do their best
13%
34%
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Nearly all Most About half Some None

Three-quarters of the respondents agree *or* strongly agree *that teachers work together to do what is best for students. This appears as a strong endorsement. In response to items that enquire about level of responsibility, however, teachers offer more qualified reports. About two-thirds indicated that* most *or* nearly all *of their colleagues feel responsible that all students learn. Less than half indicate that* most *or* nearly all *teachers help each other do their best.*

to improve the school so that all students can learn. When collective responsibility is strong, faculty broadly define their commitments to both students' academic and social development; they set high standards and help each other try to attain them.

Over a third of the teachers characterize the sense of collective responsibility in their faculty as either *fairly strong* or *strong*. In these teachers' eyes, most of their colleagues feel responsible for standards, mutual support, and school improvement. Another 40 percent provide a more *limited* endorsement. They feel that this orientation is only characteristic of about half of their colleagues. Even weaker reports of *very limited* collective responsibility are offered by about a quarter of the teachers. They indicate that only a minority of the teachers are really engaged.

A COMPARISON OF ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS

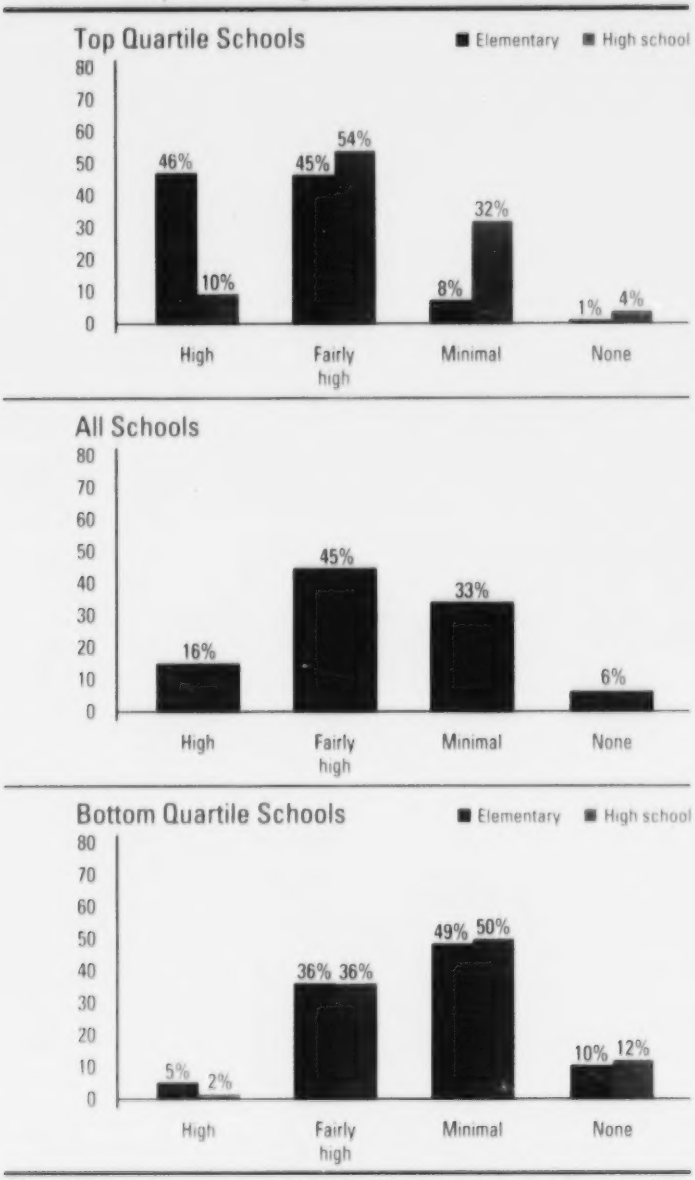
Up to this point, our discussion on professional community has focused on the overall responses of Chicago Public School teachers. Clearly, the character of professional communities varies among schools. The differences between elementary and high schools on the critical elements of professional community and the resulting consequences for professional orientation are especially striking.

Analysis of Professional Community

Reports from high schools are substantially lower on all aspects of professional community. In fact, the teacher ratings from an average high school are comparable to those from the weakest elementary schools. These differences are especially large for peer collaboration and focus on student learning.

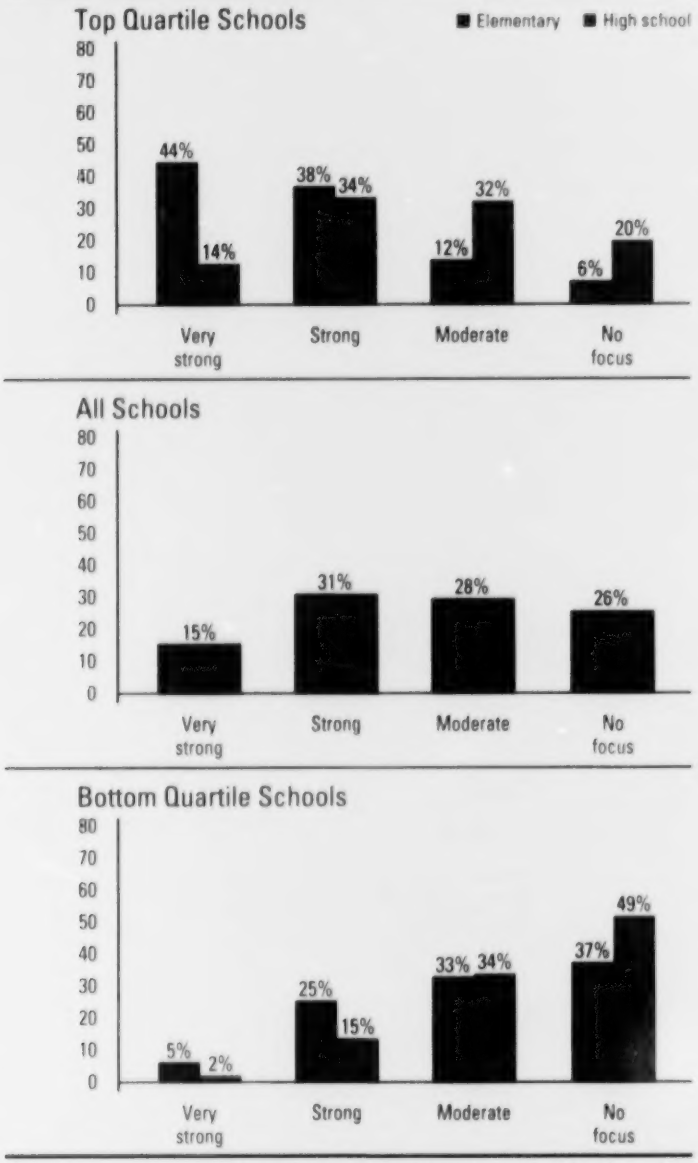
Another key difference is the wider variability in results from elementary schools. While the reports from some elementary schools look like those from high schools, many elementary schools offer much more positive profiles.

Peer Collaboration
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



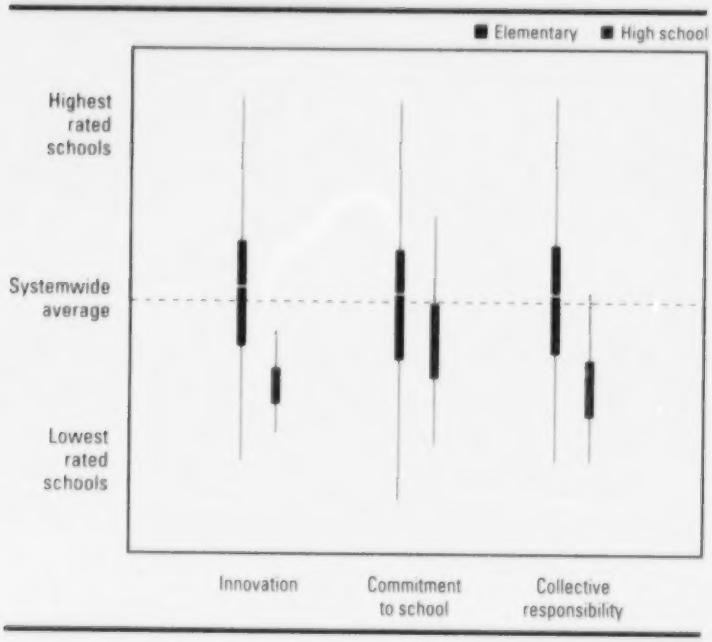
These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

Focus on Student Learning
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

Professional Orientation
Distribution of School Indicators



focus on student learning. Less than half of the teachers in top quartile high schools describe their schools as strongly focused on supporting the academic and social advancement of students. In the top-rated elementary schools, however, over 80 percent report such an intense focus. Again, it is appropriate to describe this orientation as normative in the top-rated elementary schools. In contrast, such norms are very uncommon among Chicago's high schools.

Analysis of Professional Orientation

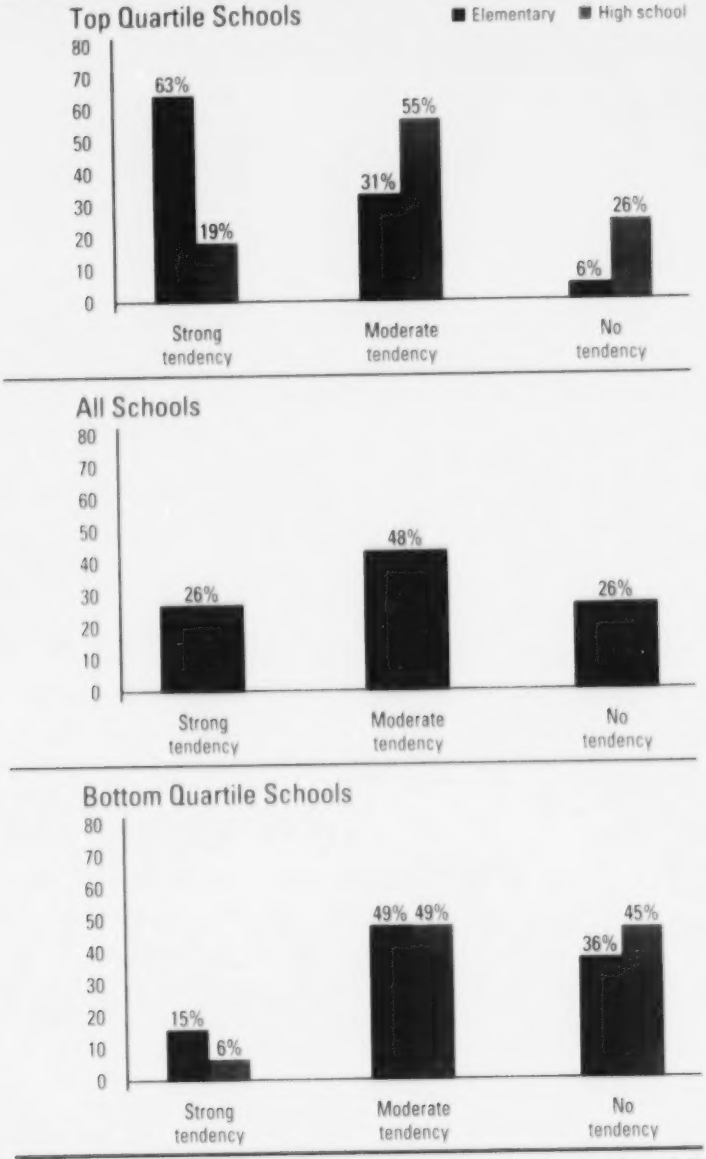
Reports from high schools are also substantially lower on all three aspects of professional orientation. High school teachers offer much more negative reports than their elementary school colleagues about their orientation to innovation, commitment to the school, and collective responsibility for its improvement. Again, teacher ratings from an average high school are comparable to those from the weakest elementary schools. We illustrate this by comparing the top and bottom quartile elementary and secondary schools, respectively, for innovation and collective responsibility.

Over 60 percent of teachers in the top quarter of elementary schools report an eagerness to try new ideas, take risks, and engage change both on the part of their colleagues as well as themselves (see graphs on page 42). In contrast, only 19 percent of the high school teachers in the top quartile report a similar orientation towards innovation. These high school reports are more like those found among the lowest-rated elementary schools. Thus, while a solid majority of teachers in the high-rated elementary schools report a strong orientation to innovation, the same is true for only a small portion of high school teachers, even in the most positive high schools.

The same pattern appears as we scrutinize teacher responses to the item cluster that comprises collective responsibility. Over 70 percent of the teachers in the top quartile elementary schools report that most of their colleagues have a strong sense of responsibility for helping each other, improving the school, and setting high standards for themselves (see graphs on page 43). In contrast, in the low quartile elementary schools, about 80 percent of the teachers indicate only a *limited* to *very limited* sense of responsibility among their colleagues. While some teachers in these schools are clearly concerned and committed to improvement, these sentiments do not characterize the overwhelming majority.

Here, too, the reports from the top quartile high schools look much like the weakest elementary schools. As for the low-quartile

Orientation to Innovation
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



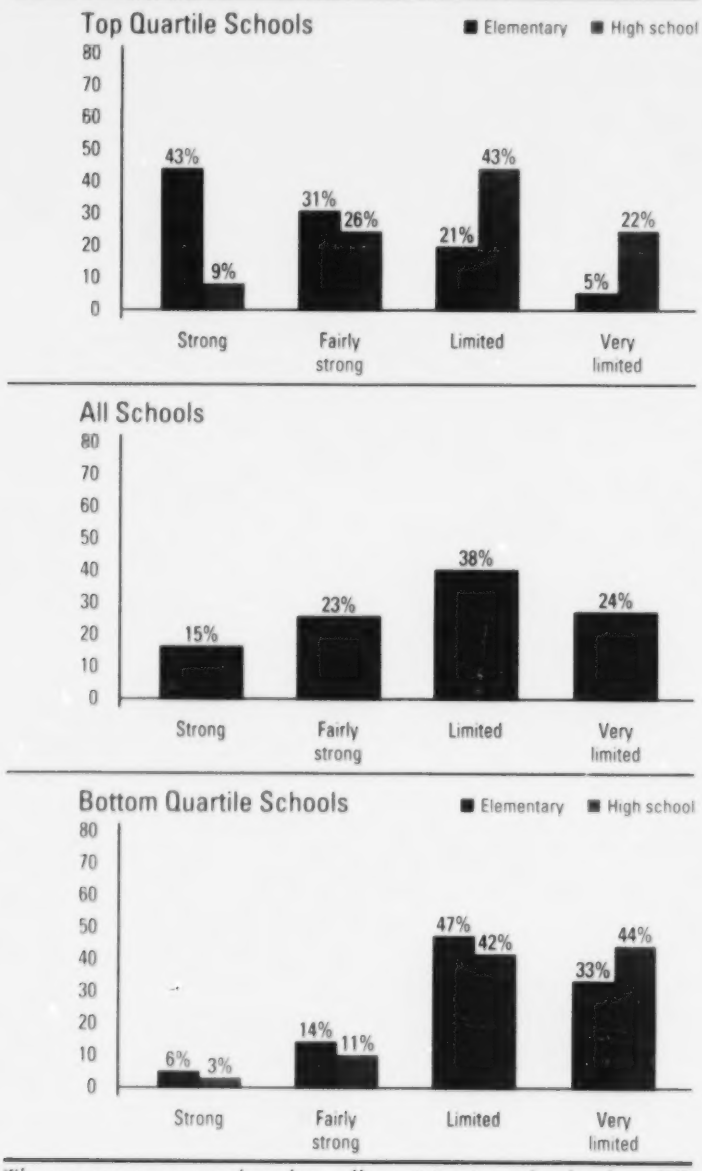
These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

high schools, 44 percent of the teacher responses were classified as *very limited* responsibility. As the next Consortium report will document, many of these schools confront daily low student attendance, poor engagement in learning, and weak academic achievement. These schools also have at best only a modest level of adult resources to redress these student problems. The overall pattern of high school teacher reports certainly provides reason to pause and ponder. If these data are even close to being an accurate reflection of daily life in these schools, they imply very poor work environments with large numbers of demoralized staff in many high schools.

Analysis of Professional Development

Teachers in elementary and high schools also report different levels of access to professional development activities. Over 40 percent of the teachers in the top quartile elementary schools participated extensively (more than nine times a year) in school-based activities (see page 44). In these schools, professional development is a regular and sustained part of many teachers' work lives. In the top-rated high schools, about a quarter of the teachers reported the same level of participation. While most teachers in most elementary and high schools participated at least two or more times in school-

Collective Responsibility
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



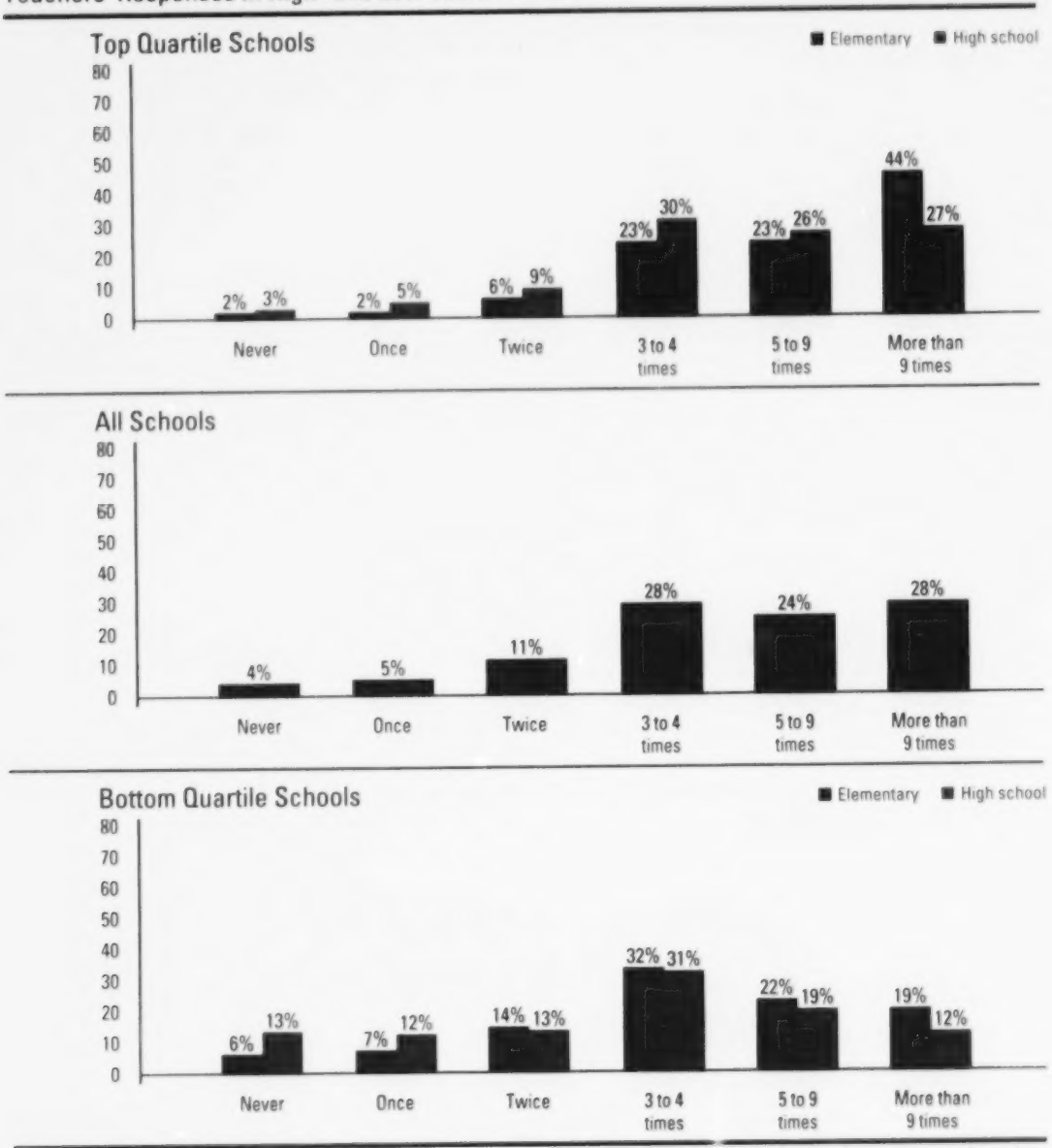
These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

based staff development, it is noteworthy that 25 percent of the teachers in the low-rated high schools participated only once or never.

In terms of teacher participation in professional development activities outside of schools, this is one of the few areas where high school and elementary school teachers look relatively similar. The frequency of these activities are only slightly higher in top quartile elementary schools as compared to the top quartile high schools. The majority of teachers in both the bottom quartile elementary and high schools did not participate in a single external staff development activity over the course of a full academic year. That is, they did not voluntarily attend a workshop or course at the Central Service Center or at the CTU, nor did they take a college or university course related to improving their teaching, nor did they participate in a network with other teachers outside of the school, nor did they discuss curriculum and instructional matters with an outside professional group. These teachers appear completely isolated from external professional activity.

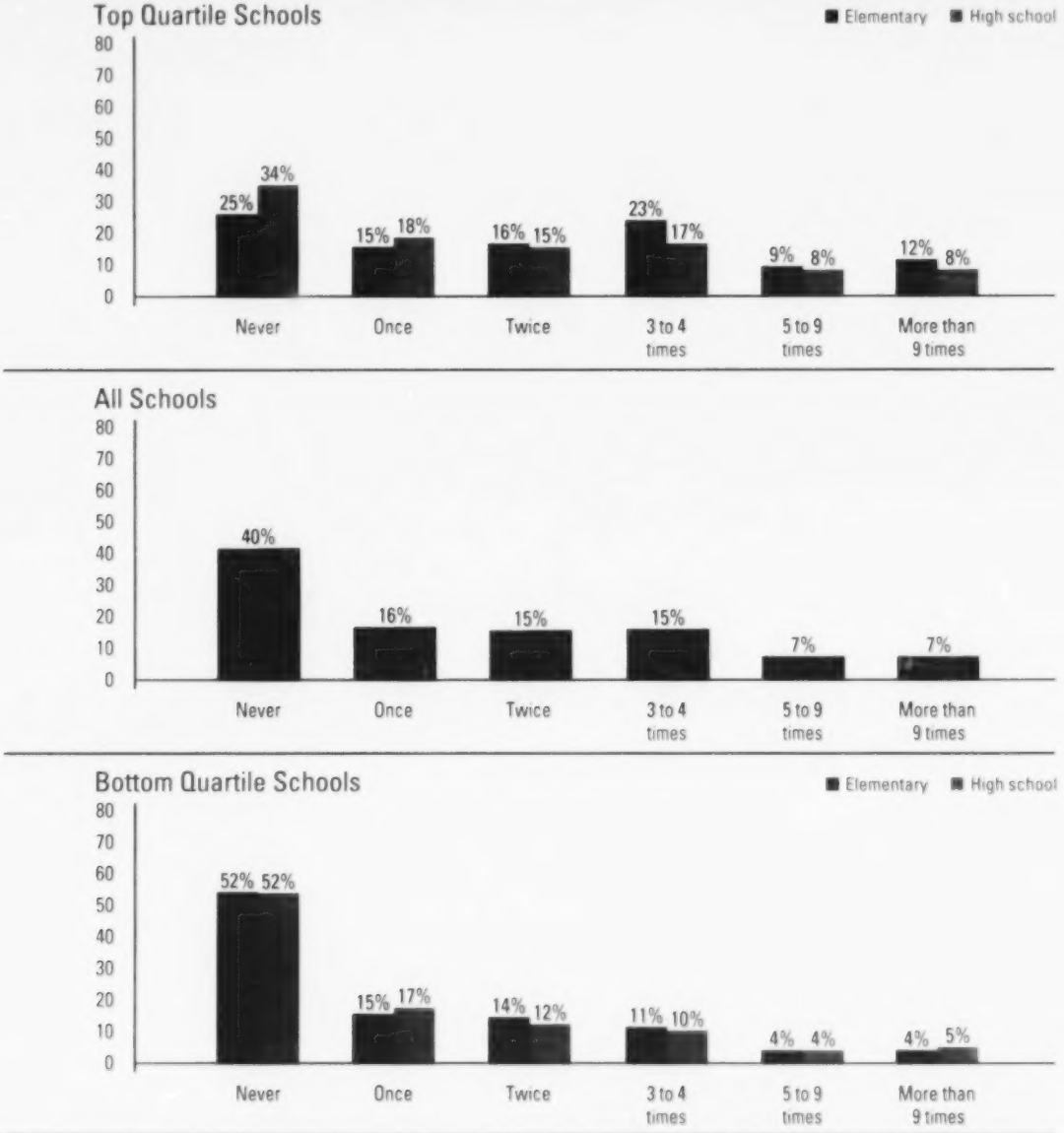
The differences reported in this section between elementary and high schools are quite large in both relative and substantive terms. Teachers in most high schools offer very negative reports about their colleagues, their work condi-

School-based Professional Development - This Year
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

External Professional Development - This Year
Teachers' Responses in High- and Low-rated Schools



These percentages are based on all participating schools; they differ slightly from those reported earlier, which were based on the probability sample.

tions, and professional orientation. With peer influences among students particularly strong and negative during this developmental period, adults need a special solidarity if they are to create engaging learning environments for students. However, many high school teachers appear alienated from their colleagues and only weakly tied to the school and its improvement. Absent strong ties among the adults, it is a daunting task ahead for the system to create more effective high schools.

In contrast, the situation in elementary schools appears much more hopeful. The overall picture is considerably more positive, and many Chicago elementary schools are moving forward quite nicely on their own initiative. Some, however, are not. In fact, the differences between the high- and low-performing elementary schools is like a "world apart" on most of the measures considered in this section. Reports from the worst elementary schools are just as troubling as from the high schools. These schools, too, are likely to need external intervention if reform is to have a chance of taking root.

Hoffmann High School: An Organization Overwhelmed

We conclude this section with a look at "Hoffmann" High School. The experiences in this school illustrate the problems confronting Chicago as the city seeks dramatic improvement in its high schools. As part of the Consortium's three-year study of the Classroom Effects of Reform, this school illustrates the complex problems of high school reform. None of the routine answers—incompetent teachers, a need for more money or better programs—really work here. ***"Hoffmann" is a pseudonym for an actual school.***

Hoffmann High School resides in a big, stately-looking building in a quiet neighborhood. The school offers a broad array of courses to students from all walks of life. White, Latino, African-American, and Asian families all send their children to Hoffmann for a good education. Making it work has proved far more difficult than anyone thought.

Like most Chicago high schools, Hoffmann is burdened with a range of disturbing but sadly familiar statistics. Nearly half the students attending Hoffmann come from low-income families. Over 20 percent of the student body is absent each day. Nearly 40 percent of ninth- and tenth-grade students are failing courses, many of them two or more. By twelfth grade, nearly half have dropped out. Enrollment swings, state and city policy shifts, changes in district leadership, and the ongoing funding crises have fueled a pervasive sense of instability at the school. Still, Hoffmann is considered one of the better public high schools in Chicago—a troubling indicator of the low expectations and standards that now exist across the city.

While Hoffmann may be better than some schools, there is little evidence that it is a better school than it was in 1989 when Chicago's reform sought to trigger, among other things, an infusion of parent involvement, school restructuring, and teacher professionalism. The great majority of Hoffmann's administrators and teachers arrive at work each day and do the best they can, but the number and complexity of the problems they face constantly overwhelm any efforts to set a new course and work for change. For example, in spite of the intense frustrations about insufficient parental support, strong outreach and involvement programs do not exist.

The organization of the school day and the instructional program remain fragmented and impersonal. Every day 2,000 teachers and students, many of them strangers to each other, shuttle themselves through a series of class periods. Nor are the conditions of teachers' work at the school more collaborative or professional than they were six years ago. These factors and others are contributing to a growing reform gap between Chicago's elementary schools and its high schools.

Consider, for example, the state of teachers' development and community at Hoffmann in comparison to that developing at Imani, the elementary school profiled earlier in this report. At Imani administrators and teachers regularly meet to critique and develop their instructional programs and practices. The process is often difficult but it is also rewarding. A tradition of professional development and community is emerging. The same cannot be said of Hoffmann.

In short, there is very little teacher development and community at Hoffmann, and morale among the staff is low. One basic problem is little or no progress in developing conditions that boost morale and motivate professional efforts and standards. Just like factory workers, Hoffmann teachers punch a time clock at the beginning and end of each day (the system is used for payroll). But it's a system that expresses no trust and makes no distinctions between teachers who are working hard and teachers who are hardly working. It's a demoralizing way to begin and end each day.

The state of basic working conditions at Hoffmann is terrible. The building and grounds are dirty as are classrooms and bathrooms. Teachers are assigned too many students and too much paperwork. Most have no work spaces or assigned classrooms, and they receive almost no clerical or technical assistance. Each day, time is wasted wandering the building looking for supplies, making photocopies, or searching for someone to unlock the book closet. And Hoffmann teachers lack a critical requirement of successful schools—common planning periods in which to work with colleagues.

Not surprisingly, the most active teacher group at Hoffmann is a problems and grievances committee that tries to improve basic services such as security, cleaning, parking, and student rules. Hoffmann does not have an active PPAC, teacher senate, teacher council, or any other significant teacher group exploring teacher and school development or working to strengthen academic standards. Subject departments are not strong organizing units, either. Most department staffs meet only to disseminate news and information from the school's administration. Without any reliable structures where teachers regularly pool their talents and confront the problems they face, it is easy to see how Hoffmann has become stuck.

A few teachers at Hoffmann are working together to build new programs. For example, a group of teachers and an administrator developed a small school-within-a-school that is positively affecting the attendance and grades of its students. And many of Hoffmann's new teachers are looking for ways to form supportive working relationships with each other. But significant schoolwide efforts to improve have been frustrated by a general unwillingness to rethink the structures, procedures, and support systems of the school. Five years ago Hoffmann teachers voted to explore the redesign ideas of the Coalition of Essential Schools; five years of funding were attached. But essential supports, such as common planning periods, were never provided. As a result, only a few teachers volunteered to engage in the effort; many who did have left the school. Now, there is little evidence that the initiative ever existed.

Despite negative work conditions, some teachers at Hoffmann still accomplish amazing things, but they do so in isolation from the rest of the school. Working with one's department, debating new ideas, serving on committees, or attending staff meetings or in-services are often seen as a waste of energy. "I've been there and I've done that and nothing comes of it. I just teach my courses and my kids," explains one teacher.

A retreat behind classroom doors, or behind tenure and seniority rules, is an understandable strategy in a school with over two thousand students, one hundred teachers, fourteen departments, seven bell schedules, and specialized programs for low achieving students, college-bound students, ROTC students, bilingual students, work-study students, plus a dozen others. But, in the end, it simply punts problems around and around the organization and pits teachers against one another. A good example is the school's relationship with young teachers. Many Hoffmann teachers are generous about sponsoring student teachers. But if these same individuals are hired by the school, they immediately find themselves loaded down with all the most difficult courses because assignments are made according to seniority rather than a commitment to "share the load."

More teachers might be willing to put new ideas to the test and to work for change if they were more certain of administrative and community support. But they are not at all certain of this, and there is good reason why. High schools are more controlled and constrained by district and state regulations, and the size and complexity of our high schools are straining school administrators beyond capacity. In improving elementary schools, strong principals have focused their energies and attention on the day-to-day workings of their school. High school administrators, however, face far more external pressures and demands; their attentions are scattered outward to community and district concerns. Much of the remaining energies are quickly frustrated by a steady stream of small crises: a security problem, a plumbing breakdown, an angry school neighbor. Amidst these chronic demands, the big and small efforts of teachers get lost in the maelstrom of the organization.

The legacy of failed initiatives and weak supports at Hoffmann and dozens of other Chicago high schools presents profound problems that defy simple solutions. It is not simply bad programs or people or processes but rather the overall institutional structure that is to blame. Until some fundamental rethinking of the purpose and organization of our high schools takes place, it is difficult to see how most will be significantly improved by reform.

Section V

Program Coherence: The Antidote to the "Christmas Tree School"

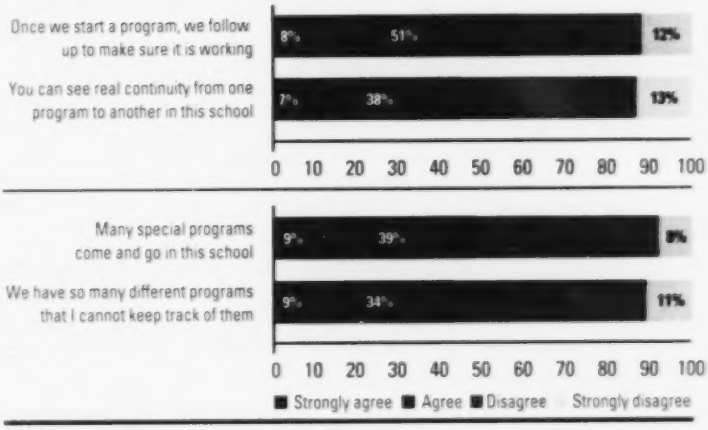
In the Consortium's 1993 report, *A View from the Elementary Schools*, we noted that many Chicago elementary schools have unfocused program initiatives. While these schools may be acquiring new instructional materials, such as computers, and may be adding desirable new programs, such as music and art, there is little sustained attention to improving basic school operations. The mainstay of these schools' improvement efforts does not focus on the more effective engagement of teachers with students around core subject matter. Although the peripheral changes are positive developments, there is little reason to believe that broad-based improvements in student learning will occur in these schools.

A more complex form of this problem occurs in some Chicago elementary schools which have become well-known showcases because of the myriad of programs that they boast for students and sometimes for parents as well. Frequently, however, these programs are uncoordinated and may even be philosophically inconsistent with one another. While principals in these schools are aggressively reaching out to bring these new, often highly touted, resources into their schools, much less attention focuses on the quality with which these new efforts are implemented and how they coordinate with core instructional programs to create better learning experiences for students.

We described such places in our report as "Christmas Tree Schools." The new, special programs added to these schools are like dazzling ornaments hung on a tree at Christmas. The basic school operations, however, much like the Christmas tree itself, might remain unattended. With so much effort focused on the acquisition of the new programs to "decorate the tree," less time and energy is left to make the whole school work better.

We asked four questions of elementary teachers about the degree of program coherence and coordination in their school. In

Questions about Program Coherence
Elementary School Teachers


Once we start a program, we follow up to make sure it is working
8%
51%
12%
You can see real continuity from one program to another in this school
7%
38%
13%
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Many special programs come and go in this school
9%
39%
8%
We have so many different programs that I cannot keep track of them
9%
34%
11%
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

About 60 percent of the teachers agree *or* strongly agree *that they follow up during the implementation of new programs. However, only 45 percent* agree *or* strongly agree *that they can see real continuity across a school's programs. Similarly, about 45 percent of the teachers endorse the statement that they cannot keep track of all the programs in the school and that many programs come and go.*

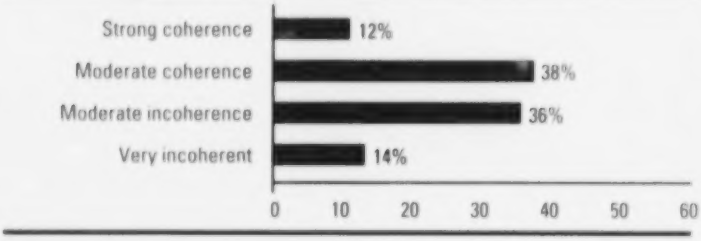
elementary schools where teachers consistently offer negative reports on these items, unfocused improvement efforts, including the "Christmas Tree" phenomenon, appear to be occurring.

Half of the elementary school teachers report *moderate* to *strong* levels of program coherence. These teachers tend to agree with positive items about implementation and program continuity and disagree with the statements about too many programs to track and programs coming and going.

We classified the responses from 36 percent of the teachers, who answered these four items, as *moderately incoherent*. These teachers indicate that they are knowledgeable about the various special programs in the school, but they do not feel that the school follows up to make sure that each program is working or that they can see real continuity across the various programs. Fourteen percent describe their school as *very incoherent*. They do not see implementation follow-though and program continuity, and they endorse the statement about so many programs coming and going that they cannot keep track of them all. These teachers experience their schools as highly fragmented work environments whose overall organization apparently does not make much sense to them.

Obviously, teachers within the same school will have many different perceptions regarding the nature of the school. We are particularly interested in identifying the kinds of schools where teachers agree that there is serious attention to program coherence and coordination. What relations, if any, exist between a high level of program coherence and the various indicators of school governance, parental involvement, and professional community considered in the last three sections?

Program Coherence Elementary School Teachers



While most of the school indicators, introduced in the earlier sections of this report, are related in a positive fashion to program coherence, four major findings stand out.[25] Elementary school teachers are more likely to report program coherence where:

A broad base of teachers have been involved in the school improvement planning process and endorse the SIP as central to the school's improvement. In such places, both the process of generating the document and continued references to it focuses local attention. It can also discipline local efforts, helping schools to resist the incoherence that tends to be foisted on them by new initiatives from outside the school.

Strong norms, focused on student learning, characterize the professional work of teachers. In schools with high levels of collective responsibility among the faculty, program quality is everybody's job. A program is good, not just because it "looks good," but because it clearly helps students.

Principals closely monitor program quality. This managerial dimension of principal leadership complements the communal dimension captured in our earlier measure of facilitative, inclusive leadership. From the communal side, principals advance coherence by promoting broad engagement around the SIP and supporting a professional community where many teachers feel personally responsible for these matters. As managers, they can also advance this aim by their direct actions, such as through close monitoring of classroom instruction and, where necessary, making critical decisions to advance the school's mission.[26]

Program coherence is easier to achieve in small schools. These results are not surprising given that larger schools tend to have more programs to coordinate, making coherence harder to achieve. Such contexts are also more difficult for principals to manage, as their attention is often distracted away from monitoring program quality. It is also harder to maintain the collective engagement of the faculty in these larger enterprises.[27] (Further details about the positive effects of small elementary schools are offered in the next section.)

With the exception of SIP implementation, none of the other facets of local school governance (LSC effectiveness, teacher influence, or facilitative principal leadership) were directly related to program coherence in our analyses.[28] This does not mean that they do not play an important role. Their role, however, appears to be indirect. Program coherence is difficult to legislate as it depends on a myriad of day-to-day efforts by school staff, much of which can be neither easily regulated nor closely supervised. Effective local governance, however, can create the conditions under which program coherence is more likely to occur—such as by supporting principal leadership, creating a climate conducive to cooperative adult efforts around such matters, and encouraging teacher initiatives in this regard.

Finally, it is important to recognize that the problems of program coherence are not new to Chicago's schools. In charting the progress of school reform, we have focused our analyses on local school decision making and the coherence of their initiatives. These local efforts, however, sit within a much larger context and history. For several decades, various interests have sought to make schools more responsive to a variety of concerns (e.g., school desegregation, education of the handicapped, bilingual education, student rights, gifted programs, etc.). Each has advanced specific programs, rules and regulations, and other requirements. How to effectively integrate and coordinate these various external initiatives, however, fell to the local school. While each of these external initiatives was motivated by a good cause, the cumulative effect of this external activity was to make schools more complex and problematic organizations.[29] This is just another part of the base context that school reform in Chicago must address. To be clear, we have no evidence which suggests that reform has exacerbated these problems. To the contrary, the additional resources and authority provided by reform have been used by at least some schools to attack these concerns. According to teachers, however, much more still needs to be done.

Section VI

The Progress of Reform in Different Elementary School Communities

We should expect diverse outcomes under any school reform that involves a decentralization of authority and where local initiative is the primary catalyst for change. At the outset of reform in Chicago, school communities varied substantially in their capacity to capitalize on the opportunities provided by reform. Some schools had a history of cooperative relations among staff and the local community and, not surprisingly, were able to move forward quickly. In other schools, the base conditions for reform consisted of weak faculties marred by distrust, negative community relations, and serious problems with safety and order. Clearly, restructuring was a more challenging task here, and many of these schools have struggled to engage reform.[32]

How reform progresses in different kinds of school communities around the city continues as a core concern. Thus, this section examines the characteristics of elementary schools that appear to be moving forward and those experiencing difficulty. Where are productive adult efforts occurring in local school governance, parental involvement, and professional community development? Where are they not?

As in *A View from the Elementary Schools*, we focus our analysis on elementary schools that are clearly in need of improvement, where average achievement prior to reform was below national norms.[31] Eighty-five percent of Chicago elementary schools fall into this category. The 1994 teacher survey includes data from 210 of these schools.

Analysis Details

In our analysis of all participating elementary schools, we considered the effects of standard school descriptors, such as percent of low-income students, racial/ethnic composition, and pre-reform achievement level. In addition, we drew on census data to characterize both the school neighborhood and student population in terms of the concentration of poverty, education and employment levels, and residential stability. We also examined key structural characteristics of schools including size, enrollment rates from inside and outside of their attendance area, and student stability, i.e., the proportion of students who remain in the school from one year to the next.

We searched for patterns between these various school community descriptors and the individual measures of school governance, parent involvement, and professional community and orientation, which were considered in the first three sections of this report. The general findings, presented in this section, emerged repeatedly across the various school performance indicators. This led us to aggregate the individual measures into an overall composite indicator of ***cooperative adult effort toward school improvement.*** Schools that are high on this overall indicator combine effective local school governance, good parental involvement, and positive professional community and orientation. We have summarized the results from both the analyses of the individual measures and the composite indicator.

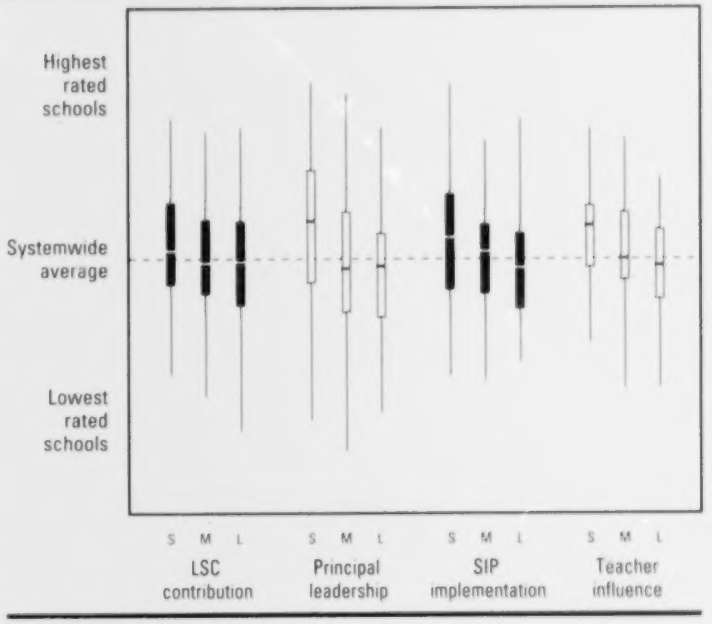
Overall Patterns

In general, schools with productive adult activity focused on school improvement[32] are broadly distributed among the various communities of the city. Four general patterns, however, have emerged:[33]

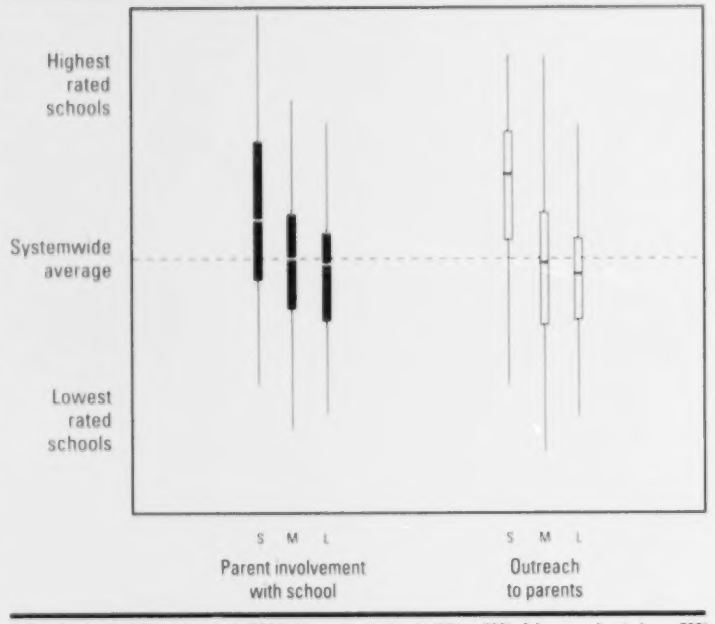
Small elementary schools—where enrollment is less than 350 students—have consistently more positive reports on most measures of school leadership, parental involvement, and professional community and orientation. In comparing the 30 highest- and 30 lowest-rated schools on a composite indicator of cooperative adult effort toward school improvement, there are six times as many small schools in the top group as in the bottom group.[34]

Some differences have emerged among schools based on racial and ethnic composition. On average, integrated schools (i.e., over 30 percent white student enrollment) have the most positive reports, followed by predominantly Hispanic schools. Negative reports, especially with regard to parent involvement and professional orientation, are somewhat more likely from predominately African-American schools and mixed minority schools.[35] It is important to emphasize, however, that a wide range of positive and negative re-

School Leadership
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools

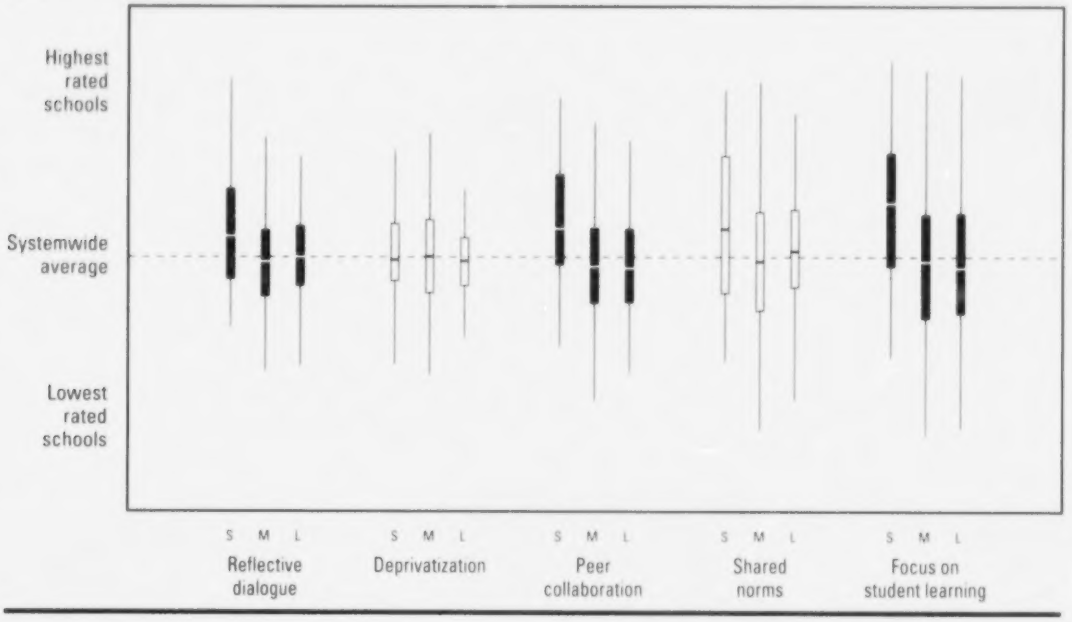


Parent Involvement
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools

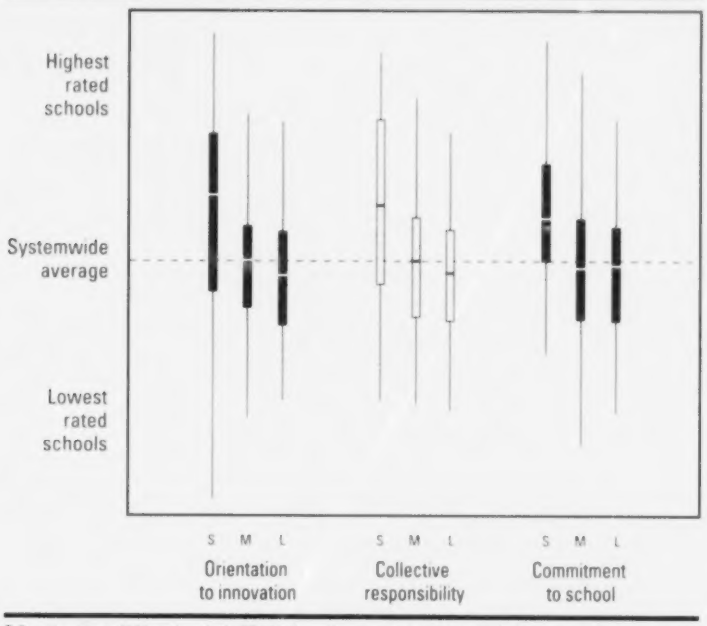


S Small schools (350 and under) **M** Medium-sized schools (351 to 700) **L** Large schools (over 700)

Professional Community
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools



Professional Orientation
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools

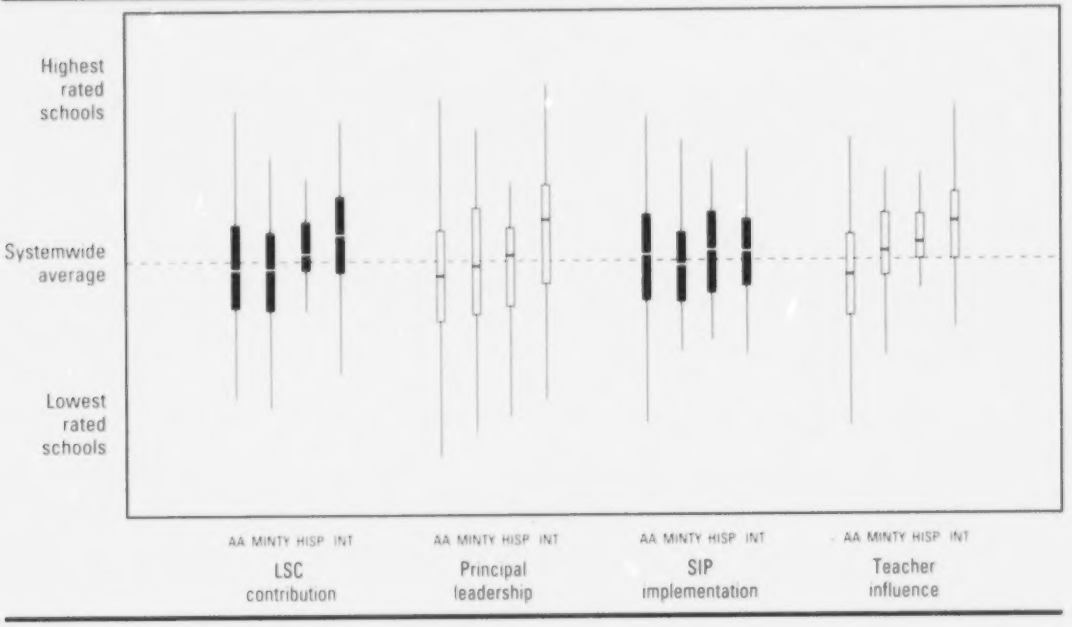


S Small schools (350 and under) **M** Medium-sized schools (351 to 700) **L** Large schools (over 700)

ports can be found within each of the four racial/ethnic composition groups. The box plots, which illustrate the variability among schools within these various racial/ethnic composition groups, clearly document this (see pages 56 and 57).

The highest-rated elementary schools serve a slightly more advantaged population. These differences, however, are not large. For example, 74 percent of the students in the top 30 schools on the composite indicator of cooperative adult effort are from low income families. Among the bottom 30 schools, 79 percent are from low income families. Similar small differences emerge for

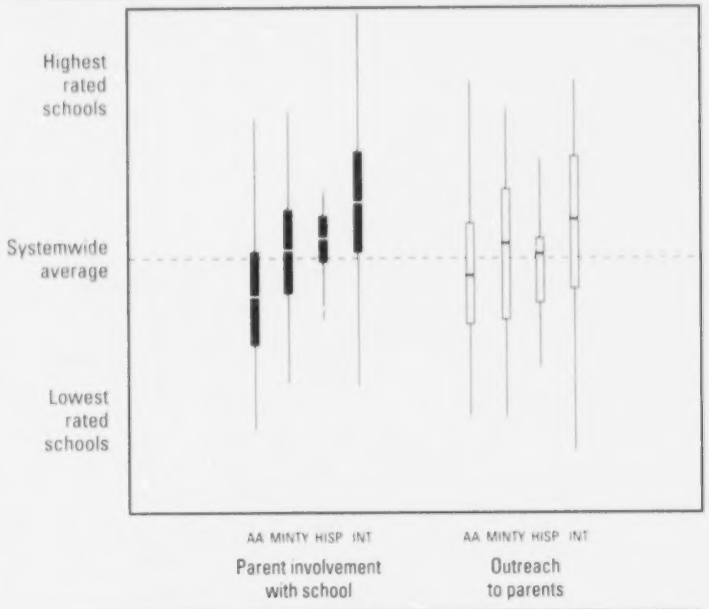
School Leadership
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary School



most of the other socioeconomic characteristics of students and school communities.

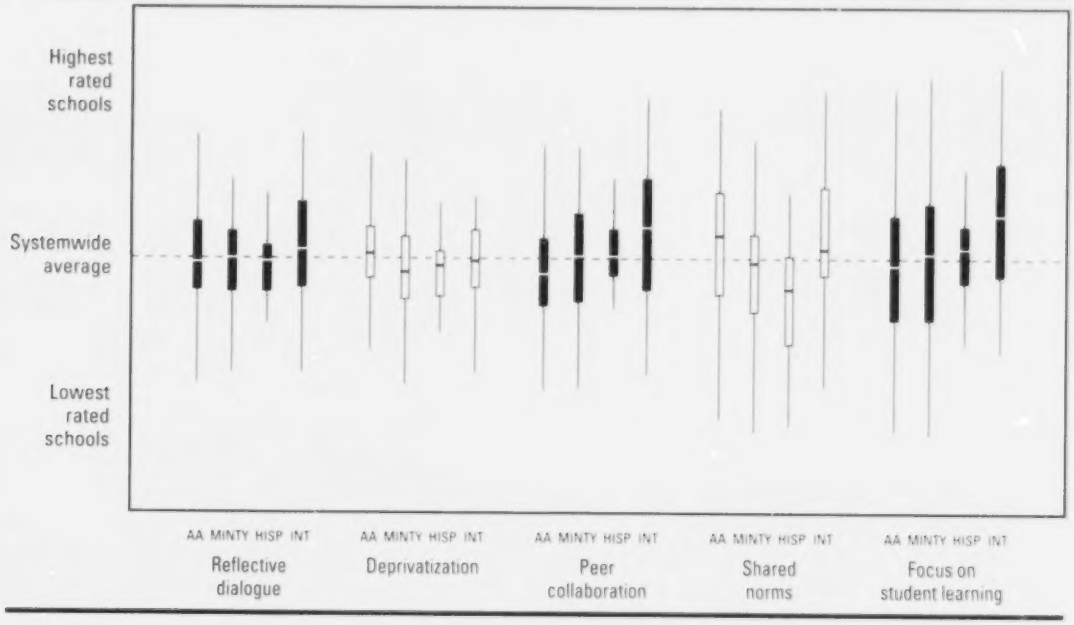
Elementary schools with stable student populations also tend to receive somewhat more positive reports. Although the average effects here are also not large and are, in fact, comparable to the figures for percent low income, these relations are significant for selected measures, including parent involvement, peer collaboration, focus on student learning, orientation toward innovation, and school commitment. All of these desirable characteristics are less likely in schools serving highly mobile populations.[36]

Parent Involvement
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools

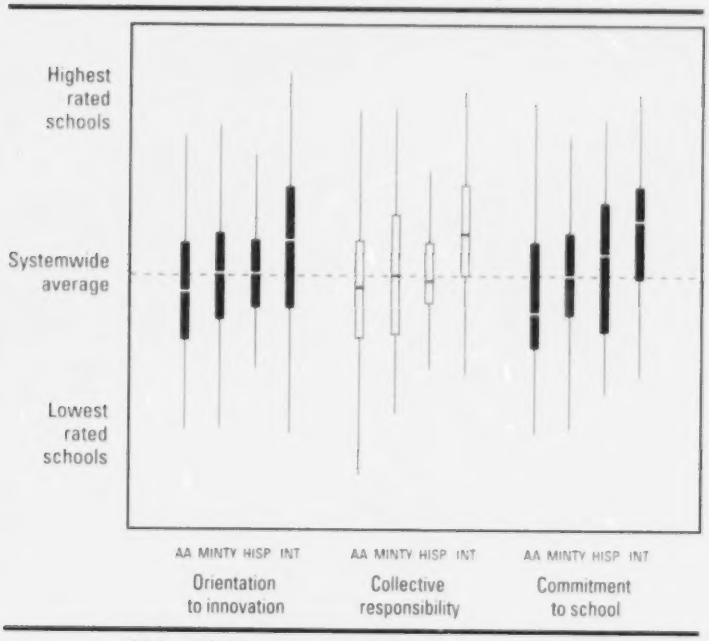


AA Over 85% African-American **MINTY** 70% or more mixed-minority groups
HISP Over 85% Hispanic **INT** Over 30% White

Professional Community
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools



Professional Orientation
Distribution of School Indicators: Elementary Schools



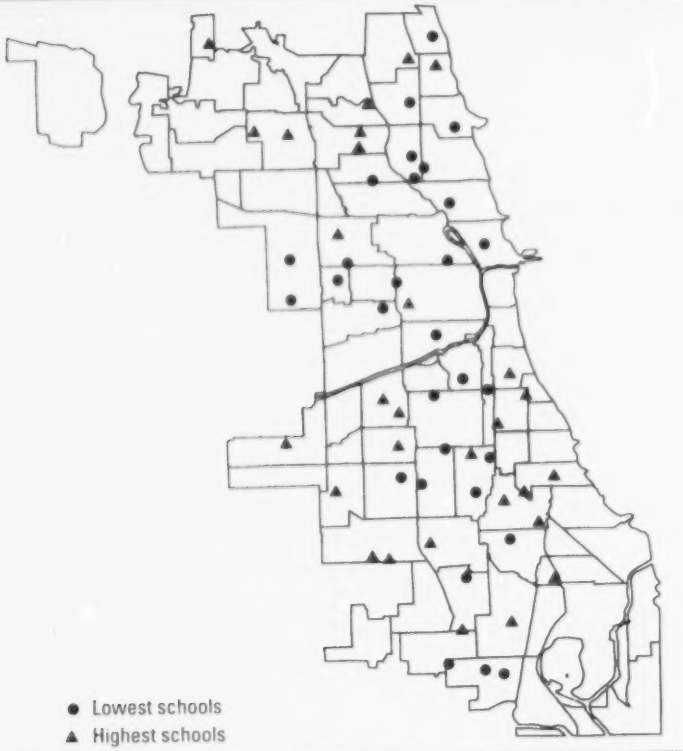
AA Over 85% African-American **MINTY** 70% or more mixed-minority groups
HISP Over 85% Hispanic **INT** Over 30% White

The collective effect of these last three factors introduces some geographic differentiation in how reform is progressing. This is the first evidence that has emerged to date of such clustering effects. We have plotted the approximate geographic locations of the top 30 and bottom 30 schools on the composite indicator of cooperative adult effort toward school improvement. The highest-rated schools are broadly distributed around this city. In this sense, positive experiences with reform are quite equitably distributed. The clumping of low-rated schools on the West side, South central, and Northeast sides follows the basic racial composition pattern mentioned in the first

point. Even so, it is important to note that there are numerous occasions where a low-rated school sits almost next door to a high-rated school. In these instances, such pairs of schools appear indistinguishable, in terms of basic school and community socioeconomic characteristics, as well as pre-reform achievement levels. Yet, teachers inside them report that reform is proceeding in very different ways.

In searching for other possible explanations of what distinguishes high-rated elementary schools from low-rated elementary schools, we returned to some observations noted earlier in this report. In commenting on the progress of their improvement efforts, teachers gave relatively low marks to the basic social relationships among students, teachers, and parents that support student learning. This is troublesome since both effective local school governance and sustained attention to school improvement would seem to demand a broad base of respect and trust among local participants. Might differences among schools in the quality of these basic social relationships be a key to their success or problems?

Lowest- and Highest-rated Schools on Cooperative Adult Effort towards School Improvement



Racial and Ethnic Tensions among School Staff

It was suggested in our stakeholder consultations, during the development of the teacher and student surveys, that racial and ethnic tensions among the staff might be a significant barrier to school reform.[37] Based on this advice, we asked teachers whether "Racial and ethnic differences among staff members create tensions in this school."

In the vast majority of elementary schools, only a small segment of teachers indicate that they *agree* or *strongly agree* with this statement. In over 60 percent of Chicago's schools, less than a quarter of the teachers endorsed this statement. In about 10 percent of the schools, however, more than half of the teachers claim this is true. Thus, although the prevalence of tensions is not widespread across the system, it is pervasive in some schools.

The reports about perceived racial and ethnic tensions depend significantly on both the race/ethnicity of the teacher and the racial/ethnic mix of the school faculty. Teachers in the minority in a particular school are more likely to report racial and ethnic tensions than teachers who are members of the majority group within that school. This pattern

tends to occur regardless of who actually forms the majority group in the school. For example, in schools with primarily African-American faculty, Hispanic teachers are much more likely to report racial/ethnic tensions than their African-American counterparts (63 percent versus 15 percent). Similarly in schools with primarily white faculty, only 16 percent of the white teachers report difficulties, but 34 percent of African-American teachers do.

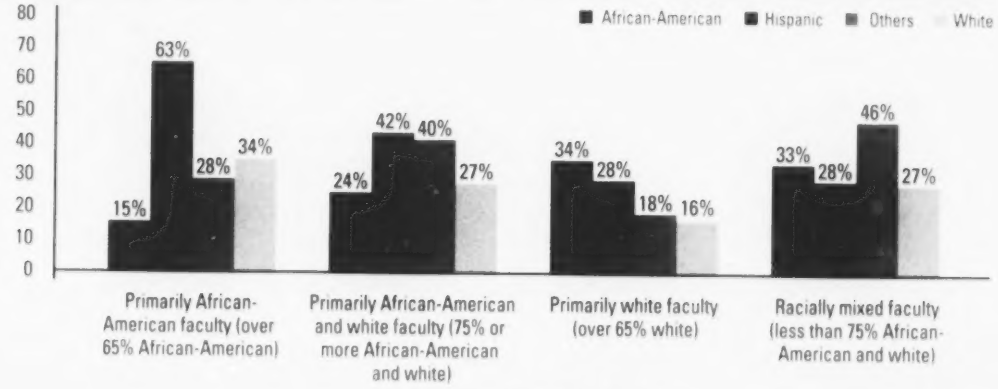
Again, the good news is that racial/ethnic tensions among the faculty are not widespread across the system. The bad news, however, is that when tensions do occur in a school, serious problems accompany them. In such places, teachers offer much poorer effectiveness ratings for local school governance, SIP implementation, parent involvement, and the level of professional community and orientation.

These results suggest that the presence of racial/ethnic tensions within a faculty undermines productive work relationships in the school and with the community and creates a barrier to school improvement. Our analyses demonstrate that teachers' reports about these problems are a powerful predictor of the progress of reform in a school community. They differentiate the overall ratings of school performance more substantially than the combined influence of all of the other school and student background characteristics discussed above.[18] In the

Prevalence of Racial and Ethnic Tensions among Faculty in Elementary Schools

Proportion of Faculty Who Report Racial/Ethnic Tensions among Staff	Percent of Schools
No teachers report tensions	21
Up to one-quarter report tensions	41
One-quarter to one-half report tensions	27
Half to three-quarters report tensions	9
Over three-quarters report tensions	2

Reported Racial and Ethnic Tension among Staff by Race and Race/Ethnic Mix of the Faculty Elementary Schools



top 30 schools on the composite indicator of cooperative adult effort toward school improvement, less than 5 percent of the teachers perceive racial/ethnic tensions. In contrast, seven times as many teachers (35 percent) report them in the bottom 30 schools.

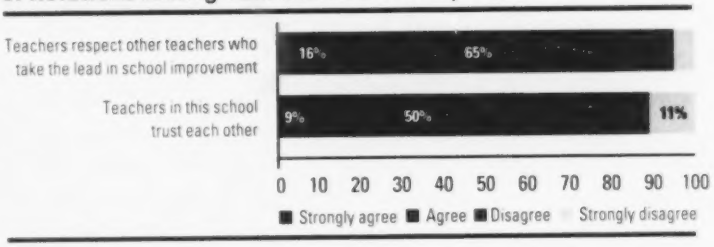
Because of the significance of this factor for predicting the progress of improvement efforts in a school community, we took a closer look at the kinds of schools where such tensions are more prevalent. In general, these problems are more likely to occur in larger schools and in schools with racially/ethnically diverse faculties. In big schools, it is much harder to maintain good communication and informal personal relations.[39] The absence of these conditions tends to breed social misunderstandings and amplifies their effects. Similarly, an ethnically diverse faculty offers multiple potential points for conflicts to emerge. Since no one group constitutes a clear majority, all of the groups in these contexts report feeling a bit like the minority members.

Also not surprising, teachers spend less time and are less involved in improvement activities in schools with high levels of racial and ethnic conflict.[40] Basically, teachers try to avoid the conflict by not engaging their colleagues. While this individual behavior is perfectly reasonable under the circumstances, it clearly does not bode well for sustaining a broad-based improvement effort. It seems very unlikely that significant reform can occur in such places if these basic problems in social relations remain unaddressed.

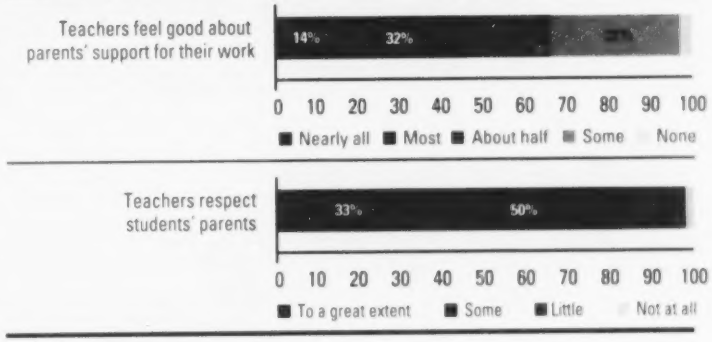
The Importance of Social Trust

The problem of racial/ethnic tensions in some schools is symptomatic of a larger issue affecting many urban schools—an absence of social trust. A long history of autocratic control (and in many cases outright abuse of authority) has made many teachers fearful and distrustful of social involvement. Similarly, parents and community members have in the past had little agency with regard to school affairs. They were often alienated from the local school professionals on whose good efforts and intentions they had to rely for their children's learning. In the most basic terms, schools were uncoupled from the parents and communities that they were intended to serve, leading to serious social misunderstanding and sometimes outright conflict. With this weak social foundation, it is argued that significant improvements in student learning are unlikely to occur.[41]

Selected Questions about the Quality of Relations among Teachers Elementary Schools



Selected Questions about the Quality of Relations between Teachers and Parents Elementary Schools



We included in the teacher survey 13 different items that focused on various aspects of the basic social relations among local school professionals and parents. We enquired about the degree to which qualities, such as respect and trust, characterized these interactions.

As noted earlier in the section on professional community, over 90 percent *agree* or *strongly agree* that most of their colleagues are cordial. This indicates that there is a modicum of civility among teachers in almost all schools. When we turn to questions about respect and trust, however, the reports become more guarded. For example, 20 percent of the teachers do not feel that teachers who take the lead in school improvement activities are respected. About 40 percent of the teachers *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the statement that "Teachers in this school trust each other."

In terms of the teacher-parent relations, teachers offer quite positive views about their own orientation. Over 80 percent, for example, indicate considerable respect for students' parents. However, teachers do not perceive parental support in return. In less than half of the surveys do teachers report that most of their colleagues feel good about parents' support for their work.[42]

Obviously there is more to this story which, unfortunately, we cannot detail because we do not have information about how parents perceive teachers' efforts. Even so, the existing data clearly indicate considerable unease among teachers regarding their relationships with parents.

Spurred on by the specific findings about racial and ethnic tensions, we undertook a set of analyses to examine whether the quality of the basic relationships in a school constitute a more general condition necessary for improvement. Following the same procedures used throughout this report, we aggregated teachers' responses about the relations among teachers and between teachers and parents to create two measures for each school (one for relations among teachers and a second for teacher-parent relations). A detailed research report on this topic is in preparation and will be released later this fall.[43] The basic results are clear, however. Social trust is a highly significant factor.[44] In fact, it may well be that social trust is the key factor associated with improving schools.

Teachers in the top 30 schools on the composite index generally sense a great deal of respect from other teachers, indicating that they respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts and feel comfortable expressing their worries and concerns with colleagues. In contrast, in the bottom 30 schools, teachers explicitly state that they do not trust each other. They believe that only about half of the teachers in the school really care about each other, and they perceive limited respect from their colleagues.

Similarly, in terms of parent-teacher trust, the typical teacher in the top 30 schools reports a great deal of respect from their students' parents, indicates that most teachers in the school really care about the local community, and most teachers feel good about parent support. In the bottom 30 schools, the responses are much less enthusiastic. Teachers perceive much less respect from parents and report that only about half of their colleagues really care about the local community and feel supported by parents.

The pattern of results found here lends credence to the argument that racial tensions among teachers are one particular manifestation of a more endemic school problem—a lack of trust among the key local participants charged with school improvement—faculty and parents. It is not surprising in a context like Chicago that social cleavages manifest themselves along racial lines. Our results, however, suggest that they also occur for many other reasons.

The Stability of School Change

Reform in Chicago calls for schools to become more effective learning environments that are responsive to their local communities.[45] The original legislation did not envision that this could be accomplished just by adding new programs and other marginal

improvements. Rather, fundamental organizational change was required. Such school change takes time to occur and requires a sustained, stable broad base of local involvement.[46] In its absence, positive first steps can quickly dissipate.[47]

For this reason, we also examined the stability of school improvement reports, comparing current results to those in our 1993 state of school reform report. These two studies have common data from 155 elementary schools with pre-reform achievement levels below national norms. For this subset of schools, we had information on the level of systemic change in each school in 1991–92 based on a composite measure that included items about supportive principal leadership, school-community relations, professional community formation, strategic educational planning, and teachers' commitment to change. (This index of systemic restructuring was based on data from both the 1991 teacher and 1992 principal surveys.) We compared this to the current reports on cooperative adult efforts toward school improvement.

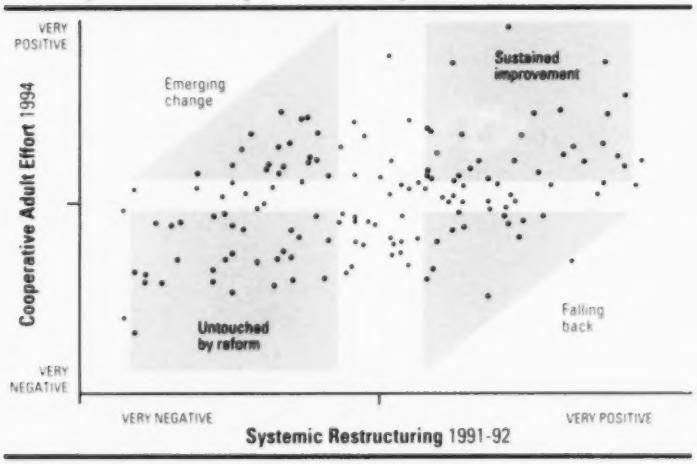
In general, there is considerable consistency between these earlier school reports and our current information. Schools with positive reports in 1991–92 generally remained positive in 1994.[48] This is encouraging because there has been substantial turnover among principals and teachers in the interim, resulting from two years of a systemwide early retirement initiative.[49] Such personnel instability could easily undermine an emerging change process.

We discern four distinct patterns in these data. The first group is characterized by *sustained improvement*. These schools had positive reports in 1992 and continue to be positive now. We observe *emerging change* in a second group of schools. These schools offer much more positive reports now than three years ago. The third group of schools are *falling back*. These schools offered quite positive reports about reform three years ago, but this is no longer the case. The final group we characterize as *untouched by reform*. Negative reports are offered by these schools on both occasions. To date, these schools have been unable to take advantage of the improvement opportunities provided by reform.

Neighborhood characteristics and student background do not explain much of the differences among these four groups. Schools categorized as either *falling back* or *untouched by reform* are a bit more likely to be located in communities with a greater concentration of poverty and a lower percentage of homeowner residences. However, the *untouched* schools are also located in neighborhoods with somewhat higher levels of household education and employment. There is no difference among the four groups in either the percent of low-income students enrolled or the pre-reform achievement levels. In fact, the groups are quite similar in these two regards.

The stability of the student population does vary across the four groups. Mobility is somewhat lower in the schools with

Stability of School Improvement Reports 1992 to 1994



sustained improvement, 31 percent, as contrasted with the *untouched* schools that have a mobility rate of 37 percent. This pattern is consistent with the findings mentioned earlier in the report. It appears harder to maintain a broad-based change effort when the ties between staff and the parents and students are unstable.

Similarly, there are differences in the incidence of principal turnover. The *untouched* schools are likely to have had multiple transitions (i.e., more than two principals) since reform. In contrast, the *sustained improvement* schools have had more stable leadership. For example, there has been a 20 percent turnover among principals in the *sustained improvement* schools over the last two years. In the *untouched* schools, however, the turnover rate has been 42 percent. In short, schools that are moving forward appear to have effective leadership and are holding on to it.

The biggest differences among the four groups are in terms of the quality of the basic social relations in the school and with the community. The levels of trust are highest in *sustained improvement* schools, followed by the *emerging change* schools. The trust reports are much lower in schools that are *falling back*, and even lower in the schools *untouched by reform*. Accompanying this are significant differences among the school groups in the prevalence of racial and ethnic tension among the faculty. Such reports are far fewer in *emerging change* schools and in those with *sustained improvement*.

These results on the stability of school improvement efforts are consistent with the findings reported earlier in this section. The social fabric woven among members of a school community is foundational for school improvement. Sustaining organizational change is highly unlikely in schools marred by distrust and disrespect, both within the staff and between the staff and parents.

Conclusion

We have sought in this report to provide a better understanding of how teachers comprehend the conditions in their schools and the current state of reform. Efforts to advance school improvement, whether at the district or individual school level, must take these perceptions into account. Quite simply, as we argued in our 1991 report, *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*,[50] significant progress is unlikely to occur unless teachers continue to engage the reform.

There is widespread consensus across the city that we must see substantial improvements in student learning. Whatever other positive outcomes may accrue, Chicago school reform will ultimately be judged a failure if it does not achieve this goal. We discern no disagreement about this aim, but there is considerable uncertainty about how best to attain it. It would be much simpler if there were just one problem with Chicago's schools and one obvious solution. In fact, the issues are numerous and the specific problems needing redress vary across school communities within the city.

In general terms, it is clear that a broad set of developments must occur if Chicago is to have a chance of reaching its ultimate goal. The basic climate of schools must become more oriented toward student learning. Adults—teachers, parents, and community members—must work together more cooperatively to engage students in this learning. And the capacities of teachers, their knowledge of the subjects they teach, and their teaching practices, must be strengthened. Past research has shown that highly collaborative working relationships among teachers and other staff and coordinated efforts between school staff and parents lead to worthy learning experiences for students and improved student performance.[51] It is for these reasons that this report has examined the prevalence of these practices in Chicago elementary and high schools.

Current Status of Reform

Teachers offer a highly varied picture of the progress of reform across the Chicago Public Schools. Many elementary schools appear to be moving forward in very positive ways. The adults in these schools are sustaining cooperative efforts focused on advancing student learning. In the best of these sites, effective local school governance couples with good parental involvement and a strong professional orientation among the faculty.

Not all elementary schools, however, share these characteristics. Some are marred by distrust among the faculty and between teachers and parents; these schools are struggling. They have neither a viable local school governance nor an effective school improvement process. The reports from teachers presented here reinforce the conclusions offered in our 1993 report, *A View from the Elementary Schools*.[52] Some school communities have been unable to take advantage of the opportunities provided by reform.

Consequently, Chicago needs an accountability system that is capable of identifying the school communities that have been "untouched by reform" and an organizational capacity to jump start the reform process in these places. Without such external intervention, it is very unlikely that these schools will improve if left to their own devices.

This pattern of highly varied results among the elementary schools is not unexpected. The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 provided both resources and authority to local school communities to initiate improvement efforts. The productive use of these resources and authority, however, depended primarily on local action. Little external support and assistance was provided by the school system during the first five years of reform. In fact, in the minds of many critics, the central office was hostile to reform. Teacher survey reports provide some support for this view. Of the various agents external to the school who might offer assistance with school improvement, outside projects and the CTU receive much more positive ratings than the subdistricts, the district, or the state.

This points to important unfinished business in Chicago's reform. A major function of a central office in a decentralized school system is to support school development. Some schools are moving forward nicely on their own. These schools would like to see more administrative autonomy to expedite their local improvement efforts. Other schools, as noted above, are deeply troubled. They need external intervention to initiate a reform process and to develop local leadership to carry this forward. Another large group of schools remains in the middle.[53] Local actors are committed to improvement, and considerable effort is being expended. Nonetheless, these schools are struggling and need sustained external support.

Five years into reform, the basic structure and orientation of the central office has yet to change to take into account the highly varied developments occurring within CPS elementary schools.[54] A major restructuring of the central office is needed to make reform work not just in some schools but more broadly across the system.

As we turn attention toward the high schools, teacher reports are more homogenous and generally less optimistic than those of their elementary school colleagues. Five years into reform, teachers in most Chicago high schools report a set of school conditions which are not conducive to major improvements in student learning.

This overall pattern of weak and often outright negative reports from high school teachers has profound implications. Rather than directing attention toward one or two major issues—if only the LSC were more effective, or if the schools had better leadership, or parental involvement were greater, or teachers were more committed—these teacher reports signal an overall institutional failure. As we directly observed at Hoffmann High, hardly anyone associated with the school feels particularly good about its operations. Even when people work hard and have some tangible resources to work with, positive consequences do not necessarily follow. These field-based observations at Hoffmann are highly consistent with what teachers are telling us more generally through these surveys. Chicago's high schools are not productive work environments for teachers and, as the next report will document, they are not productive environments for students either.

On balance, this pattern of results, although perhaps better documented here, is not peculiar to Chicago. Observations about the overall failure of urban high schools led, for example, to a charter high school movement in Philadelphia several years ago and more recently to the reconstitution of several New York City high schools into a larger number of smaller new schools.[55] In mentioning these two cases, our intent is not to advocate for a particular reform strategy. Rather, we only wish to point out that when other districts have confronted high school failure on the same massive scale as we are witnessing in Chicago, they have turned toward wholesale change in these institutions. Without efforts of this scope, it is unclear whether the benefits of Chicago's reform that we are observing in a large num-

ber of elementary schools will ever broadly materialize among high schools.

Improving the Operation of Schools

There are two well established ways to think about schools—as formal organizations, like a corporation or business, and as a family or small community.[36] Each perspective tells us something important about schools. In fact, good schools have a strong blending of the best of both.

Looking at schools as a formal organization directs our analysis to the quality of instructional materials available and the capacity of staff to use these productively to advance student learning. It also encourages us to ask whether the overall organization of the school as a workplace for adults promotes the most effective use of these resources to advance student learning.

Viewed through this lens, teacher reports about recent improvements in their teaching effectiveness and the quality of instructional materials are encouraging. These are precisely the kinds of developments that are needed to advance student learning. At the same time, the gap between teachers' views of their improving effectiveness and their lack of impact on student achievement is of great concern and merits more scrutiny. Whatever teachers may be observing and counting as improvements, apparently they do not regularly translate into enhanced student learning.

It is for this reason that this report has also given considerable attention to the evolution of professional community in schools and how this expands the capabilities of teachers and orients them to take greater responsibility for student learning. Our analysis has focused on whether schools are changing in ways that are likely to produce greater teacher productivity. Our next report picks up this concern and probes more deeply into the nature of classroom practices used by teachers and how students are engaging this instruction. Taken together, these factors—the nature of classroom instruction, the appropriateness of materials, and the organization of professional activity to promote more effective teaching—are the immediate and most direct instruments of student learning. Clearly, continued and much stronger efforts on improving the technical core of schooling, that is, how teachers interact with students around subject matter, will be needed if higher and more sophisticated levels of student learning are to occur.

When we refocus and think about schools as small communities, which educate in a myriad of ways through their everyday interactions, we begin to understand why the quality of social relations is so central to the overall vitality of the school. Quite simply, positive relations within the faculty and with parents and students are foundational to the academic mission of the school. They undergird both the level of teacher commitment to school and student engagement in learning. It is for these reasons why teachers' reports about the negative character of these relationships in most high schools and some elementary schools is so troubling. In a context where teachers distrust one another and do not feel supported by parents, the cooperative efforts needed to advance student achievement are unlikely to emerge and are even less likely to be sustained.

For several decades, federal and state policy, along with judicial mandates, have deliberately sought to uncouple schools from their communities. While these initiatives were often well intended (such as to redress a history of segregation), they had the perverse effect of distancing local school professionals from the parents and communities they were supposed to serve. A key strength in Chicago's conception of reform is its explicit recognition of this problem and its adoption of a set of structures and policies that directly attempts to promote a reintegration of schools into their communities. Clearly, this has happened successfully in some places, but not others. If reform

is to continue to make headway, more attention is needed here, too. This entails more than the redistribution of authority and resources to schools. It will require moving beyond a mindset of blaming one another to developing intensive partnerships between schools, parents, community organizations, and outside professional groups to provide the best education possible to children and youth.

Valuing Principal Leadership

The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 dramatically changed the role of principals in Chicago. While removing their tenure, it also substantially increased the resources and authority available to them. It encouraged principals to be more accountable to local constituents and deliberately weakened central control over them. By changing the system of sanctions and incentives that influenced their work, reform banked on a transformed principalship as a significant site of leadership for change.

Thus, it is noteworthy that most teachers hold their principals in high regard and typically see them as the most important local actors advancing school improvement (even more than faculty colleagues). "Good principals" function, in part, as communal leaders. By being inclusive and facilitative, they encourage participation of staff, parents, and the local community in school improvement. They also function as effective managers, making sure that there is follow-through on new initiatives, that there is a concern for quality in everything the school does, and that there is coherence to its overall improvement efforts. It is a complex and demanding role, and those who do it well deserve acknowledgment and reward.[57] The danger here is that, because principals are not large in number nor politically powerful (as teachers are), their issues and concerns will go unattended. This would be very unwise for a reform that relies heavily on principal leadership to catalyze change and sustain improvement efforts. Principals raised a number of concerns in our 1992 study of their changing role; most of these still remain unaddressed.[58]

Advantages of Smaller Schools

The findings presented in this report complement results from earlier Consortium studies. Reform is progressing better in small schools for several reasons. Small schools are easier to manage. They tend to have fewer programs, and staff are more likely to engage in common endeavors. As a result, coordinating work imposes fewer demands, and program quality is easier to monitor. Similarly, communication flows readily through direct personal relations among members of the school community. In large organizations, this personalism tends to break down which, in turn, increases the likelihood of miscommunication and distrust, a condition which characterizes many Chicago schools.

The findings presented in the report on school size complement and extend a now large body of research evidence that smaller schools can be more productive work places for both adults and students.[59] In these more intimate environments, teachers are more likely to report greater satisfaction with their work, higher levels of morale, and greater commitment. Problems of student misconduct, class cutting, absenteeism, and dropping out are all less prevalent. In general, smaller schools tend to promote more personal environments and a greater commonality of students' academic and social experiences. All of these factors help to engage students in learning, keep them in schools, and promote academic achievement.

To be sure, small size is not a panacea. One can find small schools that are just as bad as any large school. Smaller size, however, is an important facilitative factor when adults are predisposed to advance improvement efforts. From a system perspective, encouraging the development of small schools is one important element in a larger array of strategies that would help create conditions that foster improvement.

Commentary

Charting Reform: Chicago Teachers Take Stock

Ruben Carriedo
Assistant Superintendent for Planning, Assessment and Accountability, San Diego Schools

This report verifies once again that school reform is alive and well in Chicago and making a difference for some schools' efforts to improve. The latest in a series of studies undertaken by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, it focuses on the voice of teachers nearly nine thousand elementary and high school teachers in the nation's second largest school district. Their response to a comprehensive survey assessing attitudes about school leadership, parent involvement, professional community and orientation, and program coherence provides a rich description of the presence or absence of these central components of school improvement in their schools.

When asked to assess the changes that have occurred since the enactment of the Chicago School Reform Act, overall, teachers indicate a positive response. The analysis is broken out by elementary, high school, and total group, allowing the reader to see dramatic differences that exist between the two levels of schools. Of particular interest are two small but poignant case studies of an elementary and high school. The former is used as an example where a number of positive factors provide strong evidence that school improvement is occurring. The latter case is used to illustrate a school where reform efforts are still struggling.

The study provides a comprehensive set of data and their related analyses. The findings can be of great value to other states, districts, and schools committed to improving student learning. These are the significant themes that emerge.

Teachers are most positive about changes in their teaching effectiveness, professional opportunities, commitment to school, and collegiality—areas over which they appear to have more direct control. They are less positive about relations among teachers, students, parents, and support for student learning.

School reform in Chicago has produced a new style of leadership, one in which the Local School Council (LSC), the principal, and teachers share power and authority. It is worth noting the continued importance of the principal. The principal is described as "the single most important actor in promoting reform at the building level."

Although the data from students and teachers recognize the importance of parent involvement in children's education, its effective implementation in schools is yet to be realized in Chicago.

Elementary schools teachers report a more positive response to the presence of professional community in their work places and lives than their high school counterparts. The analysis highlights the striking finding that the "teacher ratings from an average high school (on professional community) are comparable to those from the weakest elementary school."

Teachers are more likely to report "program coherence" when: a) teachers have been involved in the school improvement planning process; b) teachers espouse norms focused on student learning; c) principals closely monitor program quality; and d) schools are small.

The study raises several important questions for reform advocates in Chicago and other education leaders across the country. First is there sufficient evidence after five years that systemic change can improve schools in a large, urban district? Second, how should we understand the large group of teachers who report themselves in the middle, somewhere between espousing and not espousing reform? And third, is the job doable, given the scope of what needs to be done?

The response to these three questions is simple: "yes," it's a good start," and "yes." First, the study documents where reform efforts are working and making a positive difference in the lives of school children. These efforts should be acknowledged, studied, and facilitated in other classrooms, schools, districts, and states. Second, it may be less important to focus on the middle group of teachers than upon their colleagues who are actively engaged in reform. It seems far more compelling to emphasize the group of teachers who report "very positive-to-positive" attitudes about change efforts to improve schools. These are the leaders who emerge in any group: the innovator, the risk taker, the change agent. The more significant question is whether or not they are sufficient in number to sustain productive change. These data from Chicago teachers suggest they are. Finally, the data do make more explicit the scope of work that must be accomplished to improve student achievement. The task is daunting but doable if teachers and school communities are given the appropriate support, including time.

Charles Payne

Professor of African American Studies, Northwestern University

Given the complexity of the topics, this is a highly readable account of school reform efforts in Chicago. Detailing the differences between elementary and high school teachers' responses is very useful, and the portraits of Imani and Hoffman are realistic illustrations of such differences. One note of caution concerns the response rate. Although researchers report a teacher response rate of 54 percent and 63 percent respectively for elementary and high school teachers, we need to be concerned about the variation in response rates across schools and the fact that some schools had response rates much lower than the overall average. For some schools, it is not clear that we can readily generalize these results to the faculty as a whole.

Based on the survey alone, it is difficult to assess the pattern where teachers see positive changes in themselves and negative ones in their students. This could be further explored by examining test scores of schools where teachers reported the greatest amount of change and professional development.

Much of what I have seen since school reform began would strongly support the report's contention that the quality of program implementation is frequently poor. It has not been my experience that teachers are very good judges of whether follow-up is taking place.

The discussion of social relations is especially valuable. It provides a different perspective on the discussion of "best practices," which as far as I know, has pretty much taken place without much real consideration of the social conditions of implementation. As Comer, among others, has said, simply importing an idea or classroom strategy that has worked in one place into a school with a damaged social infrastructure may be of little value, unless you take those conditions into account.

Undergirding the whole report is a certain model of educational reform, something we can call a professional community, a pedagogically progressive model. While I am committed to that model of change myself, I do not consider the empirical support for it is as strong as some of your language implies. What much of that research does is identify some practice as being associated with success and then abstract the practice from the social context; *et voila,* we have a "best practice." The problem is that without a clearer sense of the process by which the practice is put into place, the correlation between practice and outcome can be misleading. For example, I am committed to peer collaboration, but given the social reality of many schools, forcing more collaboration may generate more conflict, which schools may not have the ability to handle.

The report pays little attention to the possibility that, in certain situations, other models of change may make more sense. There may be a place for top-down, direct instruction models. Given the quality of social relationships in Chicago schools and the paucity of instructional leadership in many buildings, some of the more structured models may be easier to implement. The professional community model may require a threshold level of professional skill which may not exist in all schools. I think some of the best principals in the city are effective precisely because they blend collegial and autocratic behaviors.

In future studies, it would be beneficial to learn more about instructional leadership of the principals or vice-principals. This is a key issue in school improvement. Teachers may be doing more of the right things but without leadership to give their efforts focus, the impact may be minimal. Just like we get "Christmas Tree Schools," we get "Christmas Tree Teachers." We need to know more about how teachers and their instructional leaders actually interact.

Betty Malen

Professor of Educational Policy, Planning and Administration, University of Maryland

This latest installment in the ongoing effort to "chart" responses to Chicago school reform draws primarily on teacher surveys. It extends earlier reports by foreshadowing findings from student surveys. These extensions are commendable, but they do not overcome a major deficit in the data base, notably the absence of information from parents/community residents. Such an omission is serious because: (a) the reform relies heavily on the premise that governance adjustments, namely the influence of parents and community residents, will engender school improvements; (b) the basis for depictions and interpretations of parent-community involvement is thin; and, (c) the ability to correct or corroborate perceptions of "effects" across stakeholder groups and to interpret reciprocal relationships gets compromised. This observation does not diminish the importance of reporting teacher responses. Rather, it underscores the importance of including others' responses when a major intent of and mechanism for reform is the activation of parents and the integration of school and community.

The "teachers' assessment" provides a predictably "mixed" review of the Chicago school reform. Perceptions of school improvement, school leadership (exercised by local governing councils, professional advisory committees, and building principals), parent involvement, and "professional community" are both encouraging and disconcerting. Such varied responses are not surprising, for there are credible bodies

of evidence that suggest: elementary schools may be more receptive to "planned change" ventures of various sorts than secondary schools; policy will penetrate practice in uneven, undependable ways; and even the most carefully crafted and conscientiously implemented "innovations" may not substantially enhance the quality of life and learning in schools.

The mixed review illustrates knotty "generic" problems that plague education reform initiatives and suggest that we have tough issues to untangle. This commentary focuses on three matters that might be informed by further analysis of extant data and future research.

Explaining the High-Impact, Low-Impact, No-Impact Pattern. One of the most perplexing questions in education policy is why policy overtures engender potentially promising developments in select settings but fairly modest changes or negative effects in education systems. Insofar as the teacher survey responses constitute accurate and comparable indications of the actual "effects" of reform, there is considerable variance in reform "effects" both within and across sites. Documenting the varied reactions is an important first step. Beyond this, it will be essential to distill the reasons for the varied responses and understand how webs of factors such as individual dispositions, school cultures, local leadership, institutional features, and contextual factors interact to mediate policy impact. Portions of the report attempt to identify factors that may be shaping reform effects. This preliminary analysis could be bolstered by comparative case studies that illuminate how sets of factors interact to mediate the impact of reform in schools.

Developing the Institutional Interventions. Another perplexing question is how the broader policy system might invoke school improvement, especially when the reform strategy heralds local initiative. Efforts to "intervene" in local affairs can be seen as undermining the spirit of the reform or overturning the local authority for reform. Yet decades of policy implementation research make it clear that local units require supports of various sorts. This report documents the need to reassess the capacity of sites to address the myriad of demands confronting them and to examine the adequacy of the various resources provided in terms of the multiple claims made upon them.

Creating Social Contracts. Perhaps the most complicated, arguably urgent questions in education policy relate to how policy might create conditions that foster the development of social cultures and social contracts that support respectful treatment of all persons and equitable educational opportunities for all students. This report suggests issues of race, ethnicity, and income, as well as issues of school size, student mobility, leadership stability, professional development, program coherence, and workplace conditions, warrant additional attention.

Charting what changes have occurred since a particular reform has been enacted, let alone because that policy has been adopted, is exceedingly difficult, but vitally important, in any context. That challenge is especially daunting in a system that is as complex as the Chicago Public Schools. Amidst these conditions, the Consortium's published studies have "taken the pulse" of reform, provided pertinent information to multiple audiences, subjected interpretations to public scrutiny, and precipitated questions that are at least as important as the mid-course assessments offered. Such efforts signal a commitment to the ideals of informed, public deliberation that this "friendly critic," to borrow Lee Cronbach's term, appreciates and applauds. Hopefully these comments and the insights of others will serve to advance those efforts.

Endnotes

[1]In order to ensure that we could accurately describe how teachers and students across the city viewed reform, the survey design included a probability sample of 80 elementary and 31 high schools. We focused our initial attention during data collection on obtaining the participation of these schools. Among the high schools, 30, or 96 percent, participated, with an average response rate of 64 percent for students and 63 percent for teachers. Among the elementary sample, 64 schools, or 80 percent, participated in the surveys. Within these schools, the average response rate for students was 83 percent and 54 percent for teachers. We undertook a series of analyses for possible nonresponse bias among teachers, students, and schools in terms of basic background characteristics. We found few significant differences leading us to conclude that the probability sample is representative of teachers and students across the Chicago Public Schools. For more complete technical documentation, see the Technical Appendix, which is available on request from the Consortium.

[2]To receive a report, a school had to obtain a response rate of at least 42 percent among the teachers and 50 percent among the students. Among the schools that received reports, the response rate for elementary school teachers was 58 percent and for students was 85 percent. For high schools, both the teacher and student response rates were 65 percent.

[3]Later, when we examine differences in average scale scores across distinct kinds of schools, we will see larger, systematic differences between elementary and high schools. This is due primarily to much greater variability among elementary schools, with a portion of them scoring high on many of the measures.

[4]The scale results used throughout this report are similar to those previously used by the Consortium in its reports to individual schools that participated in the survey; see Sebring et al. (1995). For further technical details about each scale, see the *User's Manual* for the 1994 Student and Teacher Surveys (Forthcoming).

[5]See Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989).

[6]On questions regarding influence, teachers selected one response from the following: "none," "2," "3," and "A great deal." We have imputed titles on the graphs for "2" and "3."

[7]Only the 76 percent of teachers who indicated that they were *somewhat* or *very knowledgeable* about the LSC answered these questions. The remaining 24 percent who said they were *not at all knowledgeable* skipped this set of questions.

[8]See, for example, the section "A Closer Look at the Experiences of Actively Restructuring Schools" in Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Rollow, and Sebring (1993).

[9]See, for example, the analysis of LSC decision making in Easton, Flinspach, O'Connor, Paul, Qualls, and Ryan (1993). Local school professionals tended to dominate LSC discussions on curriculum and instruction issues. Moreover, most of the real planning on their initiatives appears to occur outside of the LSC in various teacher committees or by the principal acting alone.

[10]See our earlier analysis in Bryk et al. (1993). For more general research on the importance of principal leadership, see Purkey and Smith (1983), Louis and Miles (1990), Sergiovanni (1992), and Deal and Peterson (1994).

[11]The selection of these items was based on a growing body of research on the characteristics of high performing organizations in an educational context. See, for example, Fullan (1991), Louis and Miles (1990), and Sergiovanni (1994). In terms of more general organizational research, see Senge (1990) and Lawler (1992).

[12]See, for example, the central role of teachers in improving urban high schools, Meier (1995). More generally, see Fine (1994), Guskey and Huberman (1995), Sizer (1992), and Wesley (1991).

[13]See, for example, Lee, Bryk, and Smith (1993a).

[14]In phrasing questions about interactions with parents, we were careful to mention "parents and other adults living with you."

[15]These questions were asked of elementary school teachers only. We did not ask these questions of high school teachers because some of the practices do not apply to high schools and because the high school teacher questionnaire was already quite long (due to extra questions about classroom teaching and instruction in high school subjects). Although we did not ask these questions of high school teachers, the reader should not infer that we view parental participation in high schools as unimportant. In fact, our view is just the opposite.

[16]There is a growing body of research on effective parent involvement practices. Epstein (1995) provides an excellent synthesis of these developments.

[17]See Goodlad (1984) and Boyer (1983). These studies document high school teachers' frustration with the lack of parental interest and support and their sense of futility about influencing this.

[18]See, for example, PL 103-227, Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994). Requirements of high standards for all are written into the recent reauthorization of Title 1. They are also reflected in documents of various standards-setting groups such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). A description of NCTM and other standards-setting groups, as well as a historical and political account of the concept and development of national educational standards in America can be found in Ravitch (1995).

[19]Recent efforts to develop a new assessment system in Kentucky help make concrete the implications here.

The proficiency standards which they have established are benchmarked at a score of 100. The typical Kentucky school is now scoring between 30 and 40. They have set a 20-year timetable to move all schools to these new proficiency standards.

[17]This is the staff development component laid out, for example, in Smith and O'Day (1990).

[18]The literature on developing teacher professionalism is growing very rapidly. See, for example, the extensive work by Lieberman and Darling-Hammond (1989). Much research now is also focusing on how to organize schools better to promote higher levels of professional practice. See, for example, McLaughlin (1995), Little and McLaughlin (1993), and Rowan (1990). The specific conception of professional community used in this analysis has been developed by the federally funded Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For further details see Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1994).

[19]See Cohen (1989), Guthrie (1990), Cuban (1990), Sarason (1990), and Perkins (1992).

[20]The research on teacher professionalism is relatively new. Empirical studies supporting these contentions are just now beginning to appear. See, for example, Smylie, Lazarus, and Brownlee-Conyers (1995), Lee and Smith (1995), Marks and Louis (1995).

[21]See Senge (1990) for a basic discussion of the need for high performing organizational workplaces. In the context of school restructuring, see Louis (1992).

[22]All of the measures presented in the last three sections have statistically significant correlations with the school indicator (i.e., the mean of the teacher reports) for program coherence. This suggests that an "organizational syndrome" may be operative. That is, effective local school governance, parental involvement, professional community, and program coherence all tend to occur together. At least, that is how teachers in Chicago perceive their schools. The four major findings presented in this section are the stable findings from a stepwise regression analysis. Specifically, the statistically significant predictors in a school-level regression analysis on program coherence were: SIP implementation, focus on student learning, collective responsibility, school size, and principal's instructional management.

The measure of the principal's instructional management is a complement to the principal leadership measure, which captures facilitative, inclusive leadership and is described in Section II. Instructional management focuses on the principal's monitoring of instructional quality and making decisions consistent with this. The variable employed in the analysis is a school level average of teachers' responses to two items that tap this idea.

[23]The findings from these statistical analyses are consistent with the field observations from the "Experiences of Actively Restructuring Schools" (EARS) in Bryk et al. (1993). We found that the principals in EARS schools were inclusive and facilitative leaders, but they were also stewards of an emerging school vision. Not every idea or person could be supported, if the commitments undergirding the school visions were to be advanced.

[24]The negative effects of large school size on student and teacher engagement have been well documented. See Lee et al. (1993b) for a comprehensive review of this research.

[25]Once SIP implementation, focus on student learning, collective responsibility, school size, and principal's instructional management were included in the model, none of the remaining measures had statistically significant relations with program coherence. This means that the effects of the other school factors are most likely indirect. For example, they foster higher levels of professional community or more rigorous SIP implementation, which, in turn, contribute to program coherence. This is almost certainly the case for principal leadership (facilitative, inclusive) which had a high correlation (.55) with program coherence. Once the focus on student learning and collective responsibility measures were included in the model, the direct effect of this factor became trivial. This suggests that a principal influences coherence by encouraging more teachers to take such matters seriously.

[26]This problem was documented, for example, in research on high schools in the 1980s. See, for example, Powell, Cohen, and Farrar (1985). It is also a central element in the Smith and O'Day (1990) critique of school governance that led them to endorse "systemic reform."

[27]These basic findings were described in Bryk et al. (1993). For a more detailed analysis see Chapter 5 of Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Rollow, and Sebring (Forthcoming).

[28]Because the results reported in the earlier sections indicate considerable homogeneity among the high schools on the various indicators reported here, we limited our analysis to elementary schools. Any investigation of successful reform in high schools would be more a matter of individual case studies than a statistical analysis.

[29]Specifically our omnibus measure includes: LSC contribution, principal leadership, teacher influence, SIP implementation, parents' involvement with school, teachers' outreach to parents, reflective dialogue, deprivatization, peer collaboration, shared norms, focus on student learning, orientation to innovation, collective responsibility, and school commitment. The school means for the 14 measures were standardized and an overall mean calculated.

[33]For descriptive purposes, we often refer to the differences observed in the top and bottom 30 schools. The identification of "overall pattern" was based on regression analyses that used all 210 schools. To provide a more concrete illustration of the regression results, we resorted to the top/bottom 30 comparisons. All results reported here generalize to the full sample of schools.

[34]Among the top 30 schools, 20 percent were small schools. In contrast, only 3 percent of the bottom 30 were small schools. For the entire CPS, 17 percent of the schools are classified as small.

[35]Among the top 30 schools, 47 percent were predominantly African-American. This number rises to 57 percent among the bottom 30 schools. Although predominantly African-American schools are over-represented in the bottom group, a substantial proportion of these schools still appear among the top 30. For mixed minority schools, 37 percent were in the bottom group versus 30 percent in the top. Among all elementary schools in Chicago, 50 percent are primarily African-American, 24 percent are mixed minority, 18 percent are integrated, and 8 percent are primarily Hispanic.

[36]Although student mobility is a major issue for most urban schools, this topic has received scant attention in the research literature. For a descriptive report on trends in mobility by school, see Kerbow (1995). The Consortium is also sponsoring a more detailed, analytic report on this topic by Kerbow, which will be forthcoming later this year.

[37]We are indebted to Donn Bailey for suggesting an investigation of this matter. His comments during a stakeholder meeting led us to include this item in the survey.

[38]The entire set of student background, school structural features, and demographic factors account for about 10 percent of the variance in the composite measure of cooperative adult effort. When the percent of teachers reporting racial/ethnic tensions in the faculty is added last to the regression model, the explained variance jumps to 20 percent.

[39]For a review of the research literature on this point see Lee et al. (1993b).

[40]Regression analyses indicated that the relationship between a composite measure of teacher involvement in the PPAC, LSC, and other committees and the presence of racial and ethnic tensions was significant and negative.

[41]Comer (1980) provides a seminal analysis on the misalignment of values and expectations between poor parents and urban school professionals. Closer to home, this animus toward local school professionals was manifest in the testimony offered at community forums during the mobilization for school reform in 1988. See Wong and Rollow (1990). For a further discussion of these issues in the context of Chicago reform, see Chapter 3 of Bryk et al. (Forthcoming).

[42]In a well functioning school, we would expect that most of the teachers would feel good in this regard. The survey question that we asked on this point enquired about teachers' colleagues rather than themselves. Thus, there is some ambiguity in interpreting these responses. Being generous in our interpretation of how teachers responded to the question, we might even include the "about half" category in judging a school to be "well functioning" in this regard. Even so, a third of the teachers' responses are still outside this band.

[43]See Schneider and Bryk (1995).

[44]The proportion of variance explained in our analyses of the composite index of cooperative adult efforts jumps to over 50 percent when measures of teacher-teacher trust and teacher-parent trust are added to the model. The effect of the racial conflict indicator also becomes insignificant.

[45]See, for example, the list of objectives in the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, PA 85-1418.

[46]See, for example, Comer's account (1980) of his school development effort in New Haven. Also see Louis and Miles (1990) on reformed urban high schools.

[47]For a case-study account of a failed instructional reform effort in a Chicago school, see Rollow and Bryk (1994).

[48]The correlation between the 1991/92 index of systemic restructuring and the 1994 index of cooperative adult efforts is 0.5. Since there are errors of measurement associated with both indices, the underlying latent relationship is probably stronger than this.

[49]There was a turnover of 41 percent of elementary school principals between May 1, 1992 and November 1, 1994. Also, 37 percent of elementary teachers were new to their schools between Spring 1991 and Spring 1994.

[50]Easton, Bryk, Driscoll, Kotsakis, Sebring, and van der Ploeg (1991).

[51]Barth (1991), Epstein (1995), Fullan (1991), Louis and Miles (1990), Perkins (1992), and Sizer (1992).

[52]Bryk et al. (1993).

[53]The teacher survey data presented in this report do not provide sufficient evidence to estimate the proportion of schools in each category. Our best information on this is still from *A View from the Elementary Schools*. We found that between a third to 40 percent of the elementary schools were engaged in systemic restructuring, another third to 40 percent were moving in this direction but struggling, and approximately 25 percent were left behind by reform.

[54]A little over a year ago, the CPS began the *T.I.M.E. Project* and *Pathways to Achievement*. These two endeavors focus on a restructuring of central office operations and school support. While the work on these projects is still ongoing, they promise a radical change if

carried to completion. Recent legislative changes in the Chicago School Reform Act also hold promise in this regard.

[55]Reconstitution generally involves closing a high school for a year before reopening it as a set of new schools. Under three separate organizations, 50 new-model high schools will be opened over a three-year period. Six small high schools opened in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Education have been extensively documented. See Darling-Hammond, Ancess, McGregor, and Zuckerman (1995).

[56]Bidwell (1965) articulates this basic distinction. For a review of the literature on schools as formal organizations and as "small societies" see Lee et al (1993b).

[57]This conclusion is based both on the data presented in this report and our 1993 study of the principalship in actively restructuring schools.

[58]See Bennett, Bryk, Easton, Kerbow, Luppescu, and Sebring (1992); also the conclusions in Bryk et al. (1993). Other supporting evidence can be found in Oberman and Wallin (1995) (Forthcoming), a study of individuals who have recently left the principalship in Chicago.

[59]For a recent review of the literature in this area see Lee et al (1993b).

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Charting Reform: Chicago Teachers Take Stock

A Report Sponsored by the Consortium on Chicago School Research

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The Consortium on Chicago School Research is an independent federation of Chicago-area organizations that conducts research activities designed to advance school improvement in Chicago's public schools and to assess the progress of school reform. The Consortium aims to encourage:

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- Collection and reporting of systematic information on the condition of education in the Chicago Public Schools;
- High standards of quality in research design, data collection, and analysis; and
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